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FIRST LESSONS FOR THE HARP

COMPRISING A SERIES OF GRADED
TECHNICAL EXERCISES AND MELODIOUS STUDIES
ACCORDING TO THE FAMOUS

HASSELMANS METHOD

"Love took up the harp of Life,
And smote on all the chords with might."

BY

GERTRUDE INA ROBINSON

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GERTRUDE INA ROBINSON

SOLO HARPIST

MADISON SQUARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NEW YORK CITY

Teacher of the famous method of the late

ALPHONSE HASSELMANS

at the

Conservatory of Paris

France

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Preface.

The author, in her experience as a teacher, has felt the need of a concise and attractive book for beginners on the double action harp. Much of merit has been given to the harp world for the more advanced student; but to the novice at the instrument, there is very little that is not tedious and severe.

The plan of this work is to give a variety to each lesson, and in so far as possible to make it melodious and interesting, while giving the principles of the technique in their essential forms.

This method for the double action harp is also applicable to the small harp taught in the key of C flat. There are a few places that the text runs an octave too high for the small harp, but in these cases it can always be played an octave lower and within the range of the small harp. The author is very favorable to the use of these harps in the kindergarten, as preparatory for the concert harp later.

Attention is called to the fact, that the correct position at the harp is most natural. For one of medium height, a chair nineteen inches high should be used. The harp should recline very lightly between the knees, and without resting on the shoulder, or feeling any weight of the instrument; which is so constucted as to balance at the angle at which it is played. Tipped slightly toward the player, it is easily controlled by the slightest touch of the knee. Reach out for the strings as you would for a book that was handed to you, with the elbows in a straight line with the hand.

Place the fingers on the strings with the thumb pointing up, and the second third and fourth fingers each on a string, and pointing toward the sounding board; then play the fingers, bringing each into the hand as you play, as if you were closing the hand. This gives a firm grasp on the strings and will develope a positive and smooth touch.

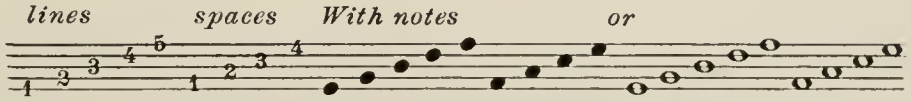
Having given sufficient cuts to illustrate this method, and with each exercise carefully fingered, it is hoped that to the earnest pupil, it will become in a large sense a self-teacher, and aid the novice to acquire the fundamental principles of this most fascinating instrument.

The Author.

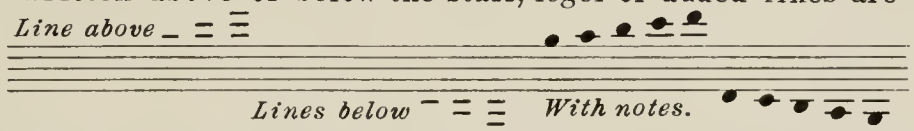
15877-58

MUSICAL NOTATION.

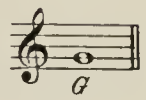
Musical sounds are represented upon paper by signs called *notes* which are written upon five lines and the spaces between them. These lines and spaces are called the staff or stave:



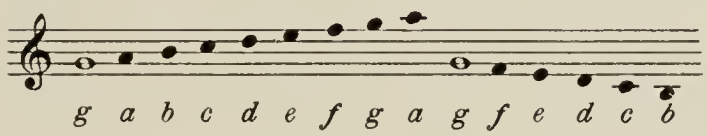
When notes are written above or below the staff, leger or added lines are used:



The notes are named from the letters of the alphabet: *A, B, C, D, E, F, G*. A sign called a *clef* is placed at the beginning of the staff and determines the name and position of the notes. Two clefs are in general use; the treble or G clef, and the bass or F clef. The G clef is placed on the second line of the staff:- - - - - thus:



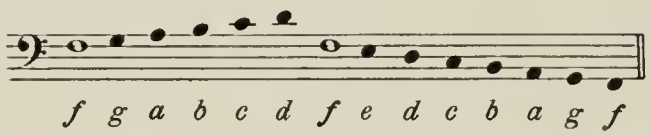
and fixes the names of all the notes above and below it:



etc.

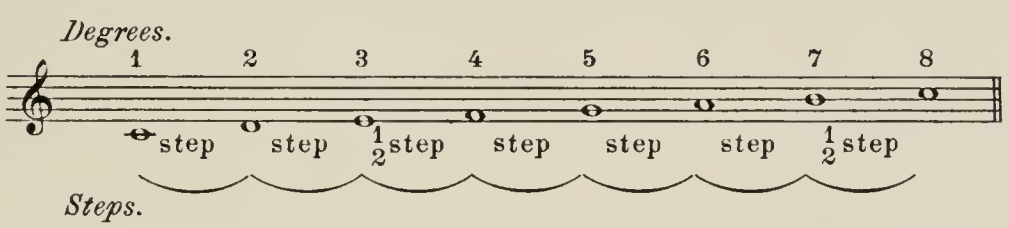
The F clef is placed upon the fourth line of the staff,

thus:



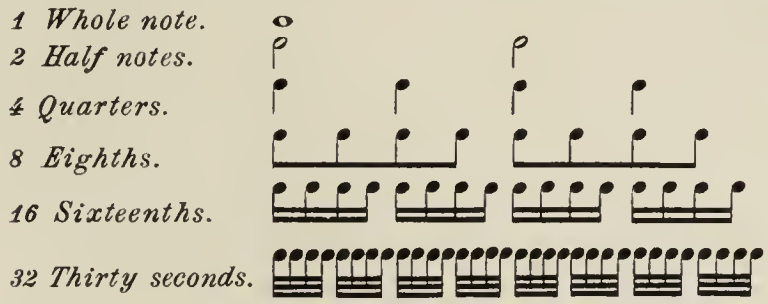
SCALES.

The diatonic major scale consists of seven tones, or degrees, and the eighth or octave from the first degree. These succeed each other by steps and half steps as follows:

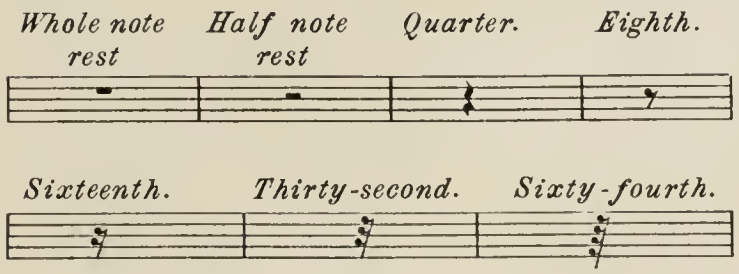


FORM AND VALUE OF NOTES AND RESTS.

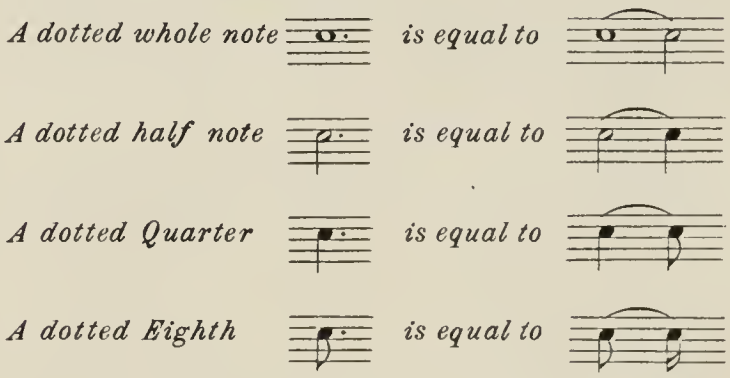
The value, or duration, of notes and rests is expressed by their different forms. The following table shows the comparative value of the notes.



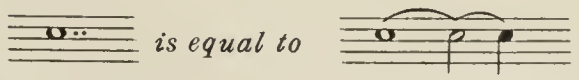
Each note has a corresponding rest as follows:



A dot after a note increases the value of the note by one half, thus:



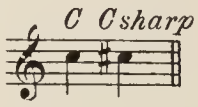
A second dot following a note increases the value of the note by one half the value of the first dot, thus:



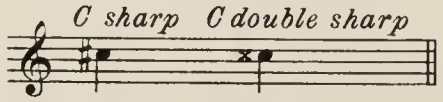
Dots after rests follow the same rule as those after notes.

CHROMATIC ALTERATIONS BY SHARPS, FLATS AND NATURALS.

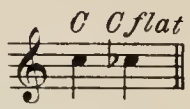
The ♯(sharp) placed before a note raises it a chromatic half-step, as C to C sharp:



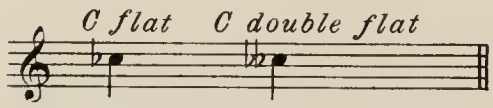
The ♮(natural) restores a note which has been changed by the flat or sharp to its original position. The 𝄪(double sharp) raises a note which is already sharp another half-step:



The ♭(flat) placed before a note lowers it a chromatic half-step, as C to C flat:

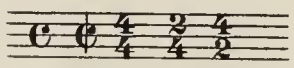
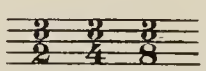


The 𝄫 (double flat) lowers a flatted note another half-step:



The ♮♯ and ♮♭ restore the note which has been raised by the 𝄪 or lowered by the 𝄫 back to the original sharp or flat note. Sharps or flats placed at the begining (Signature) of a piece affect all the notes upon which they are placed during the piece, unless they are contradicted by *accidental* flats, sharps, or naturals, and these only have effect in the measure where they occur.

DIFFERENT ORDERS OF TIME.

Time may be either *common* or *triple*, and is indicated at the begining. The time signature shows how many notes of a certain kind there are in a measure. *Common* (or duple) *time* is indicated as follows:  etc. *Triple time* is indicated by:  etc.

The *lower* figure shows the *kind* of note, and the upper one the *number* of that kind in a measure; $\frac{3}{8}$ signifies that there are three eighth notes in a measure. *Compound triple time* is a contraction of two or more simple-triple measures into one, as, $\frac{6}{4}$ instead of $\frac{3}{4}$; $\frac{9}{8}$ instead of $\frac{3}{8}$, etc.

When a strain is played twice, two or more dots are placed by the side of the double-bar:

Double bar. Single bar

Double bar with repetition of the following strain.

Double bar with repetition of the preceeding strain.

Double bar with repetition of both strains.

Sometimes the word "bis" is written over the measures to be repeated.

VARIOUS OTHER SIGNS.

⁀ A *bind or tie* connects two or more notes of the same name.

𝄐 A *pause*, which lengthens at will the duration of a note or rest.

< A *crescendo*, or gradual increase of tone.

> A *decrescendo*, or gradual decrease of tone.

<> A *swell* an increase and then a decrease of tone.

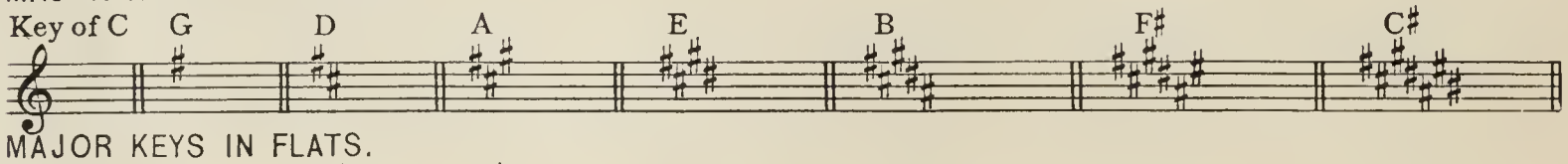
> 𝆑 – Indicate that a marked accent is to be given to the note or chord over which it is placed.

The abbreviations *vf, sf, fz, sfz, fp, rfz* etc. are also used for the same purpose.

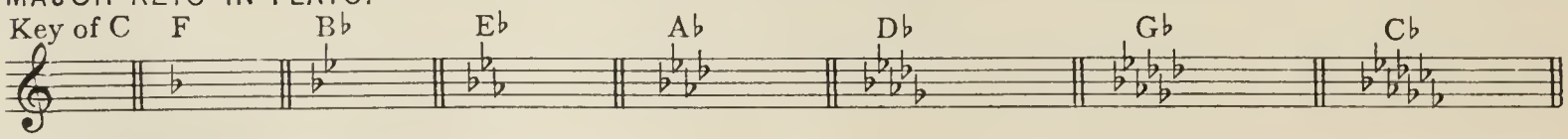
𝄋 Dal segno (the sign), means to return to a similar sign.

SIGNATURES OF MAJOR SCALES.

MAJOR KEYS IN SHARPS.



MAJOR KEYS IN FLATS.



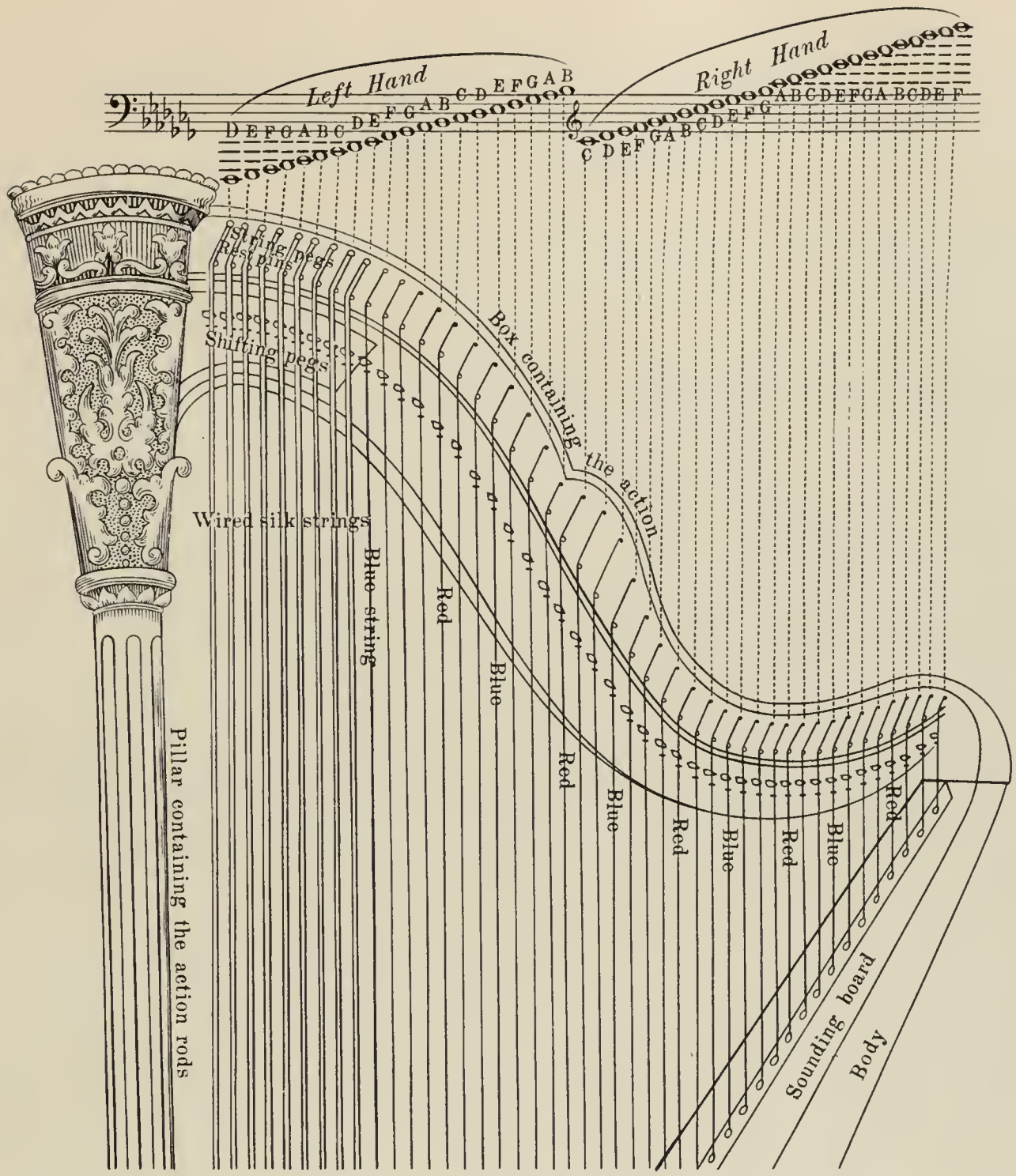
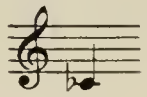
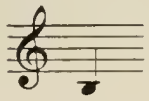
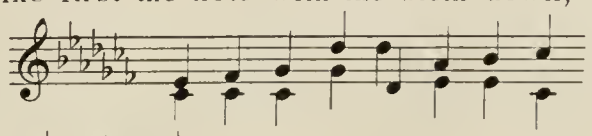
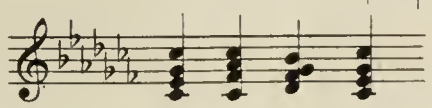


Plate showing the names of the strings and the relation of the letters to the treble and bass clefs.

HOW TO TUNE THE HARP.

To tune the harp make sure that all pedals are in the upper notch, because when the pedals are all up the strings are open, and this gives the natural key of the harp, seven flats, or C♭.

Then tune  string to  of the piano, and proceed to tune in thirds, fourths and fifths as follows; being careful to strike first the note with the stem down, and tuning the note with the stem up to it in perfect intervals.  Test the tuning by playing the following chords;  and proceed in octaves up and down the scale, being careful to play first the note in the octave already tuned.

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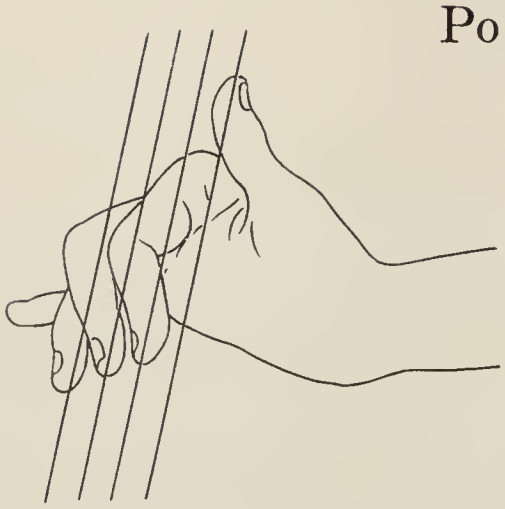
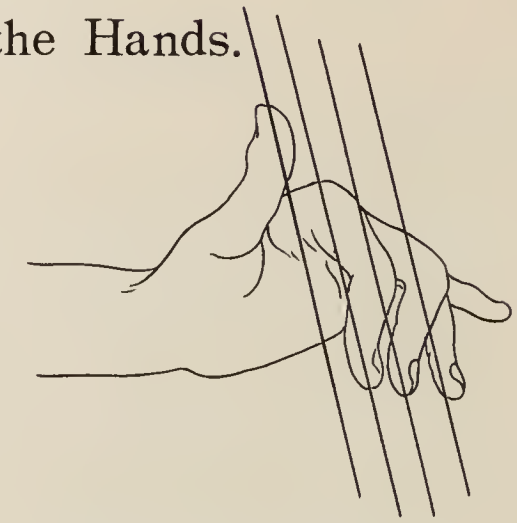
First Lessons for the Harp.

Position of the Hands.



Position of right hand.

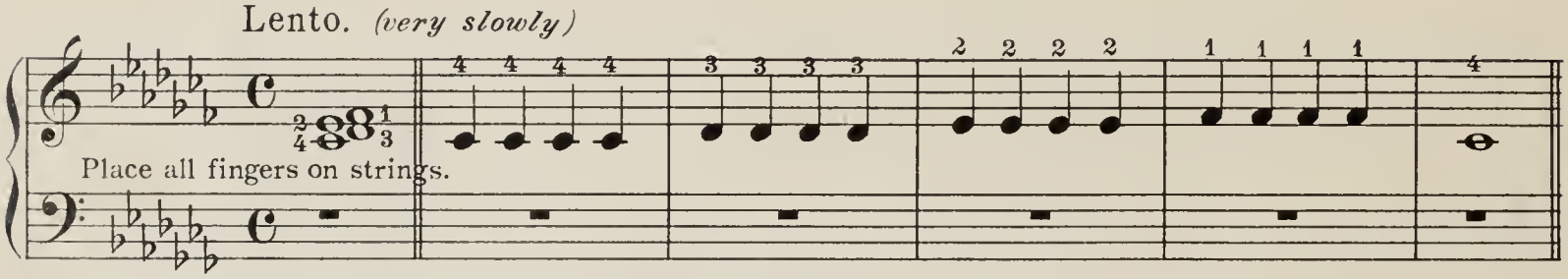


Position of left hand.

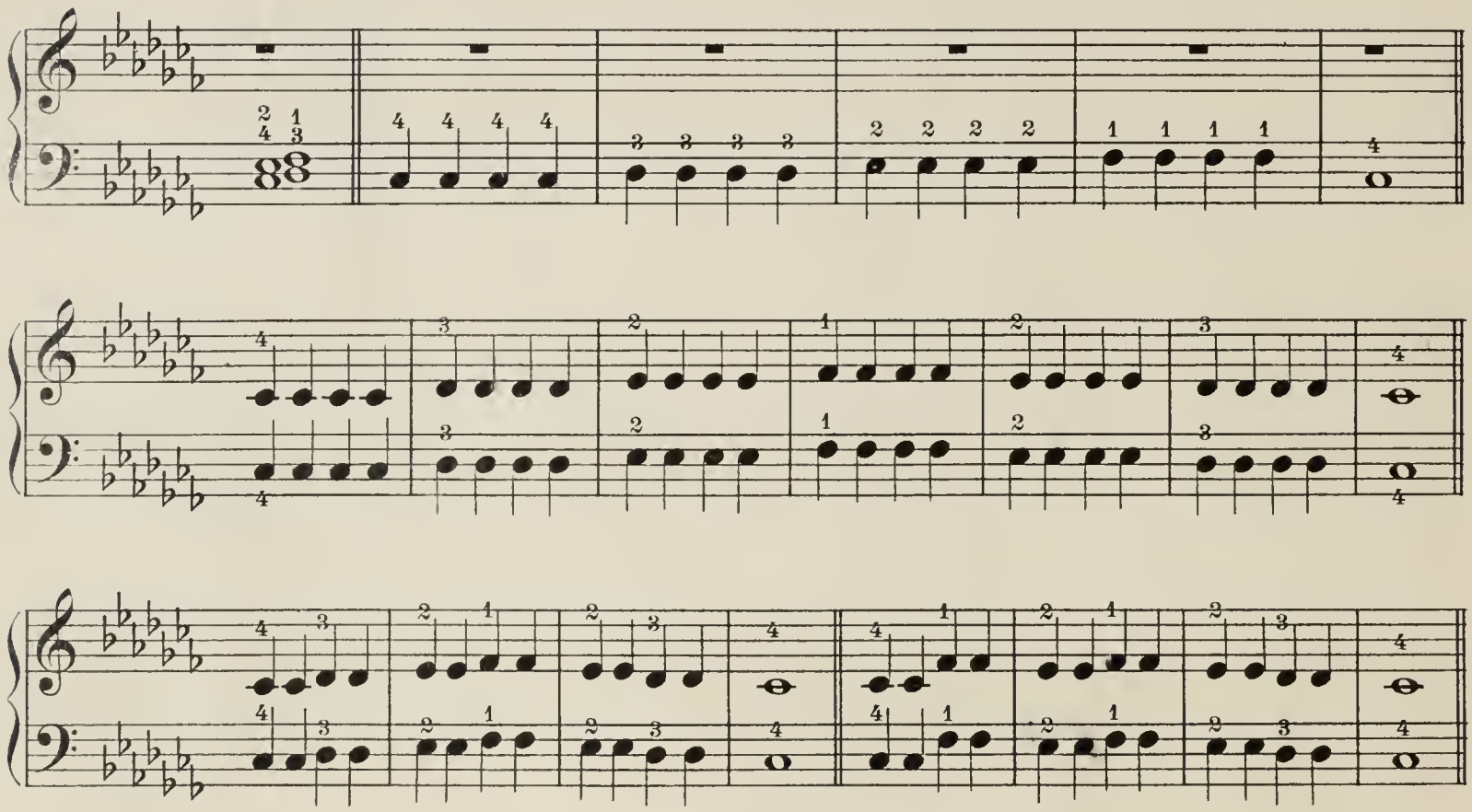
The fingering is marked according to the German method, the thumb being marked 1 and the other fingers in their order, 2-3-4, to the little finger, which is never used on the harp.

The natural key of the double action harp is C♭. All pedals must be in upper notch.

Lento. *(very slowly)*



Hold all fingers in position on strings while playing each in turn.



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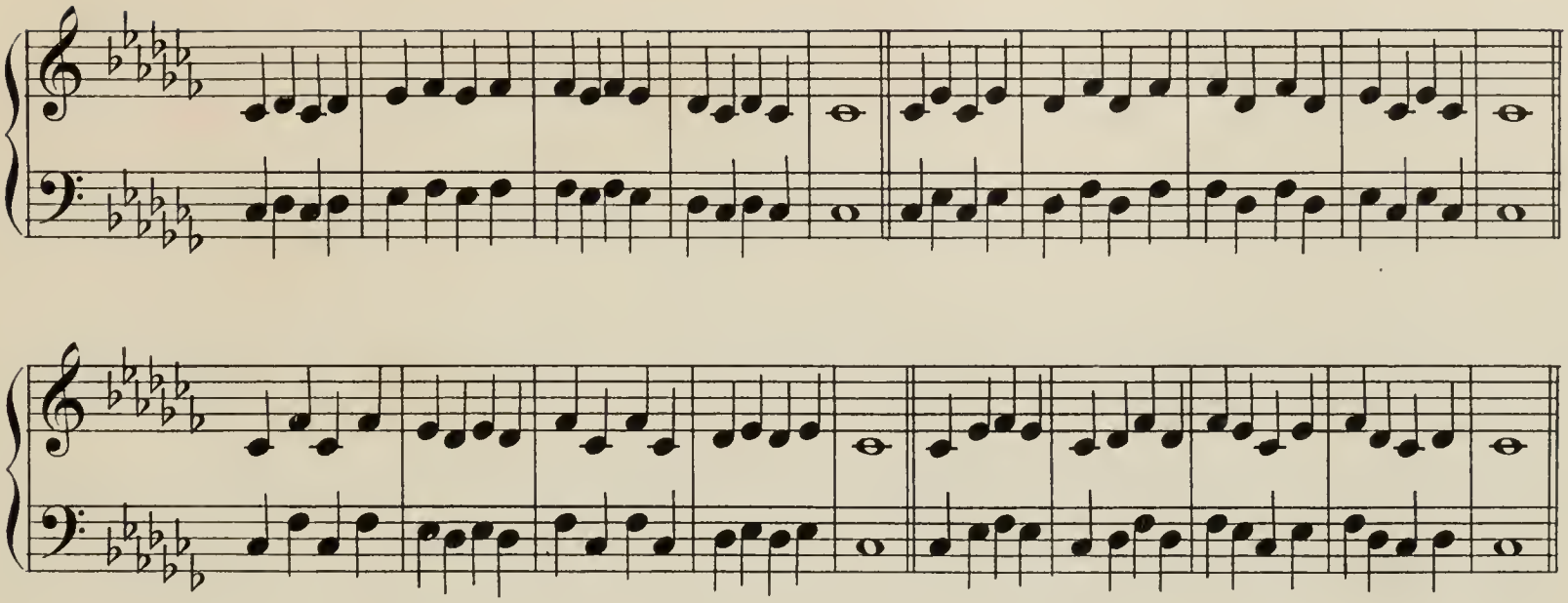
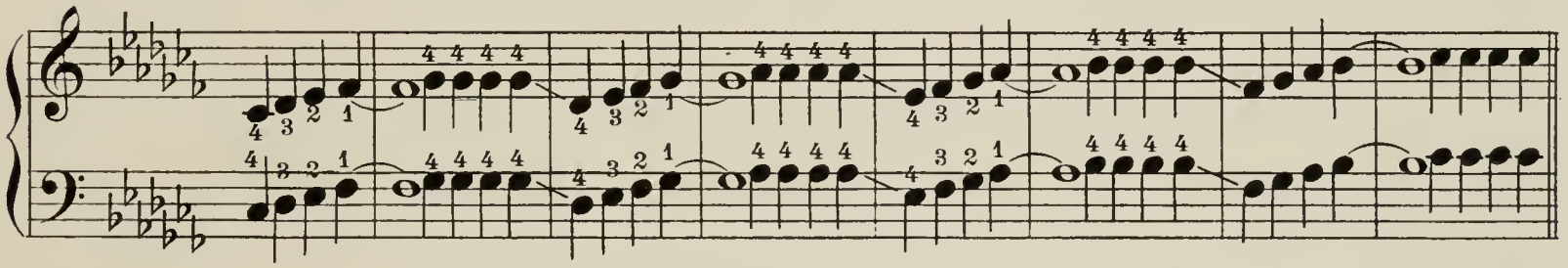
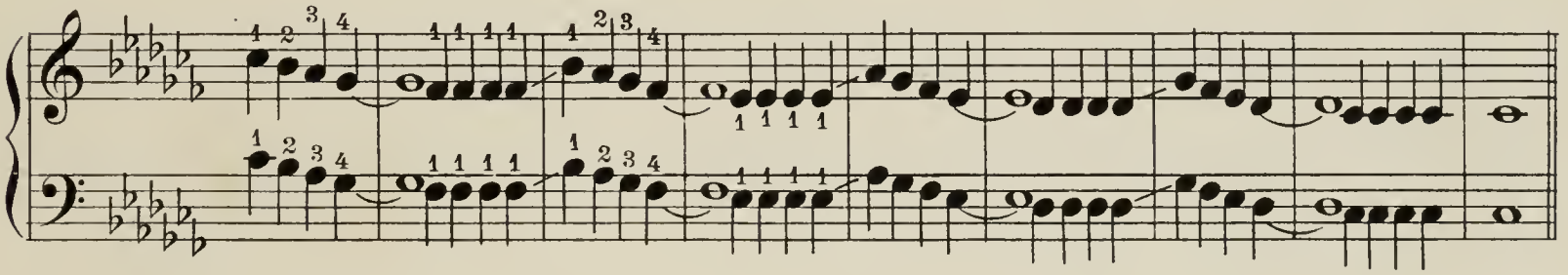


Leave each finger off after playing note but prepare next note.

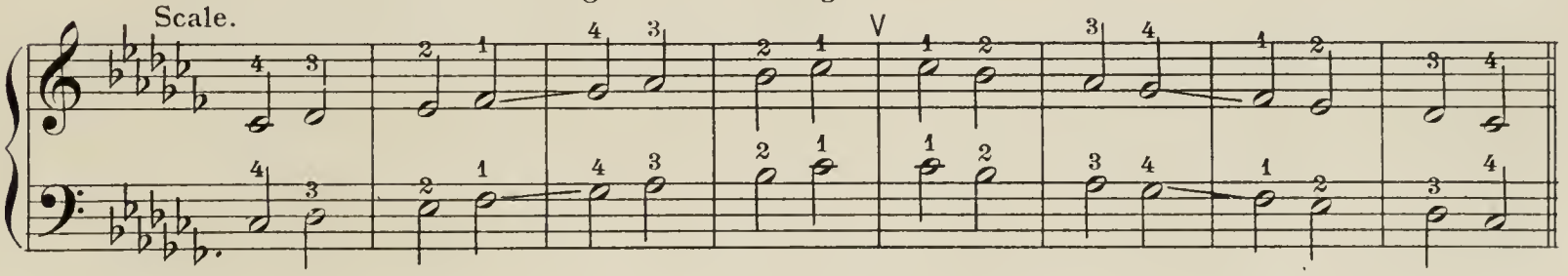
— This mark means prepare fingers. Play each hand separately, then together.



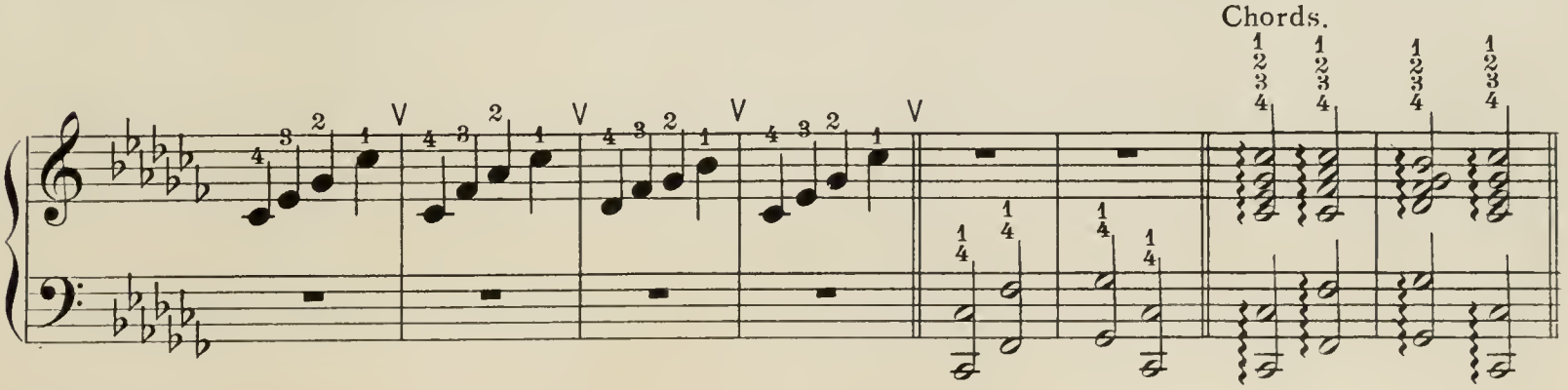


V This mark means all fingers off the strings.

Scale.

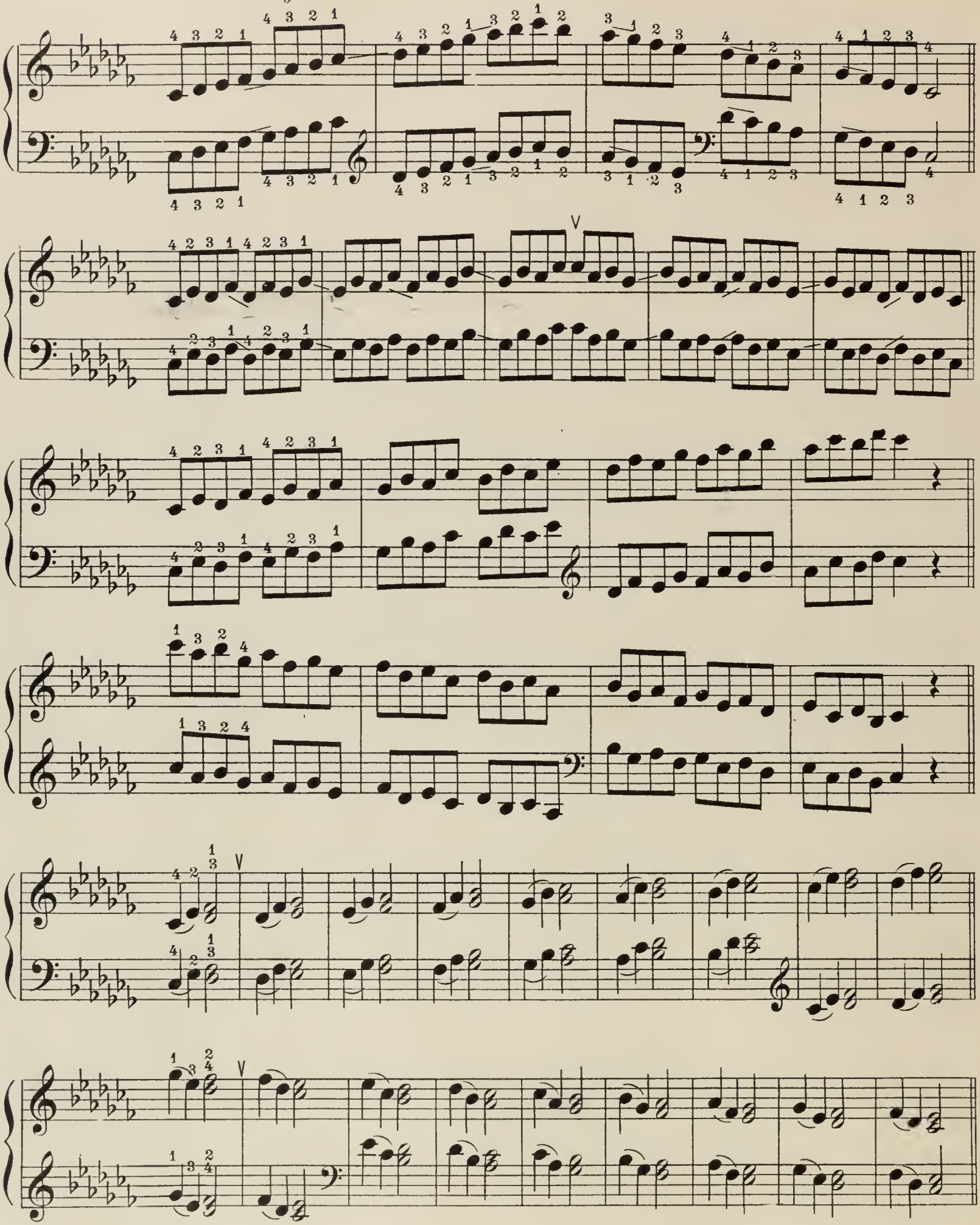


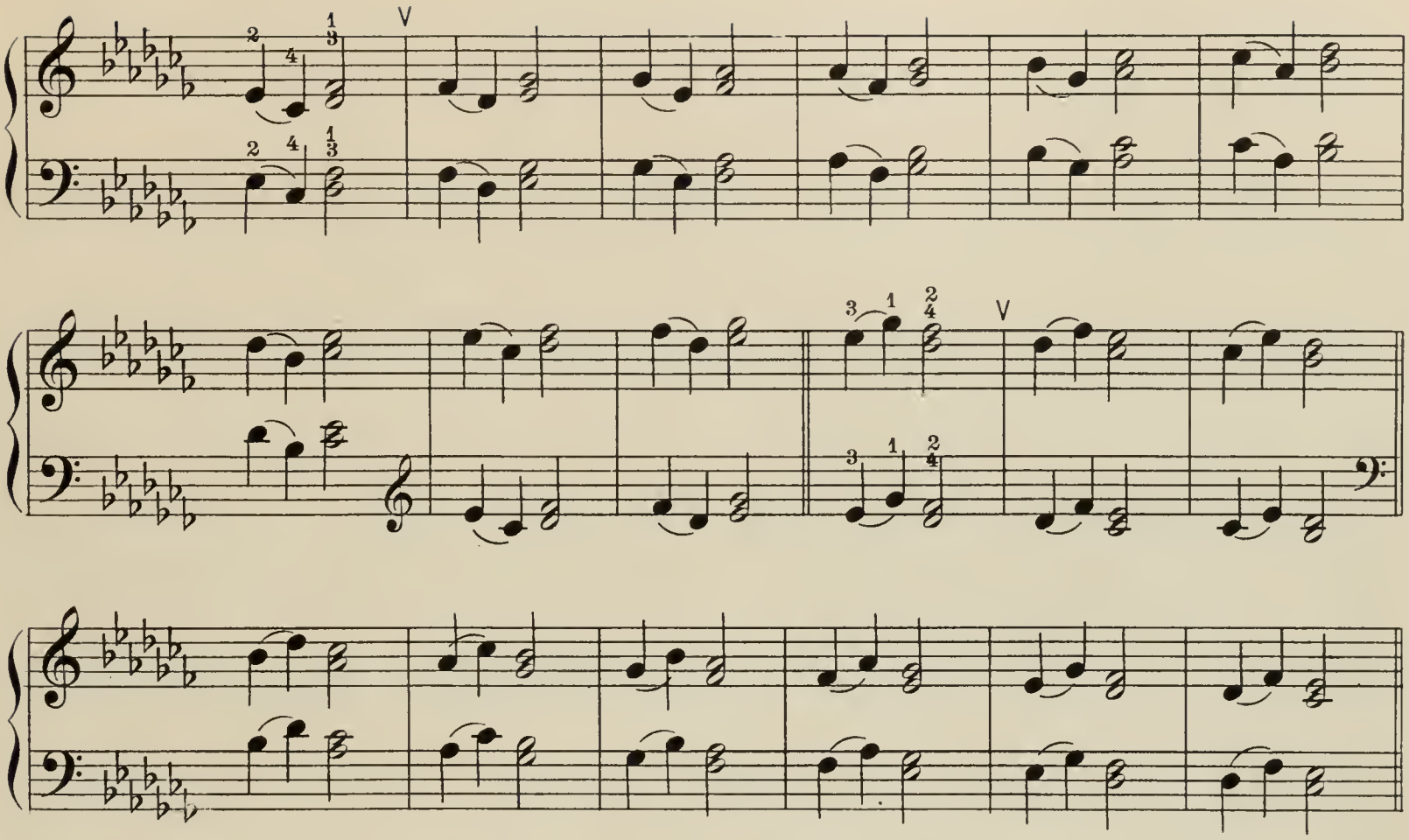
Chords.



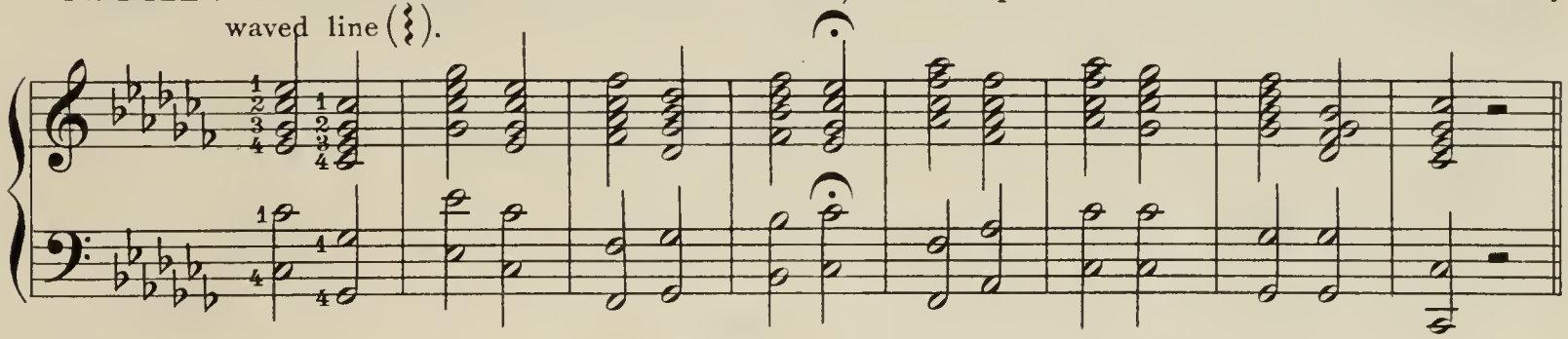
Study of Scale in two Octaves.

Andante. *(Slowly.)*

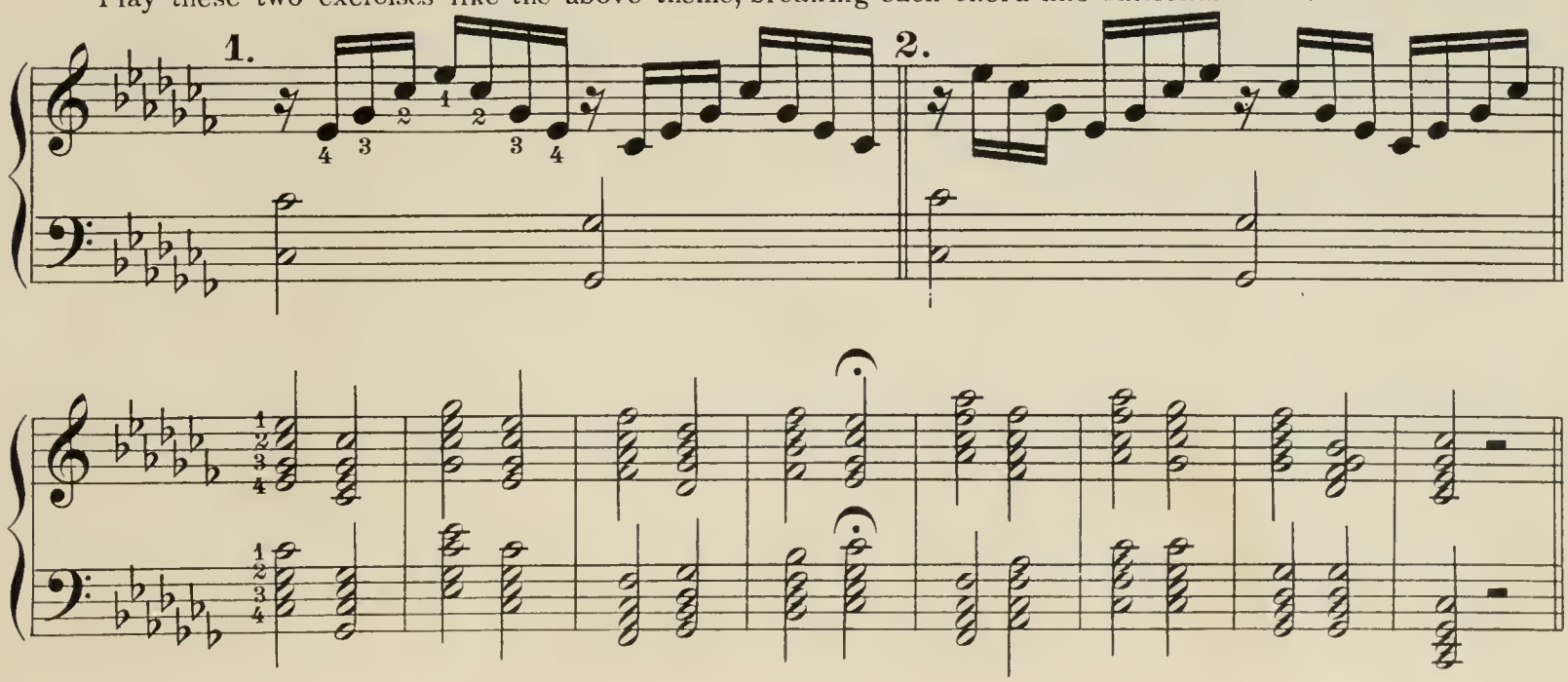




THEME. It is understood that all chords in whole, half and quarter notes are rolled, as indicated by waved line (⦚).

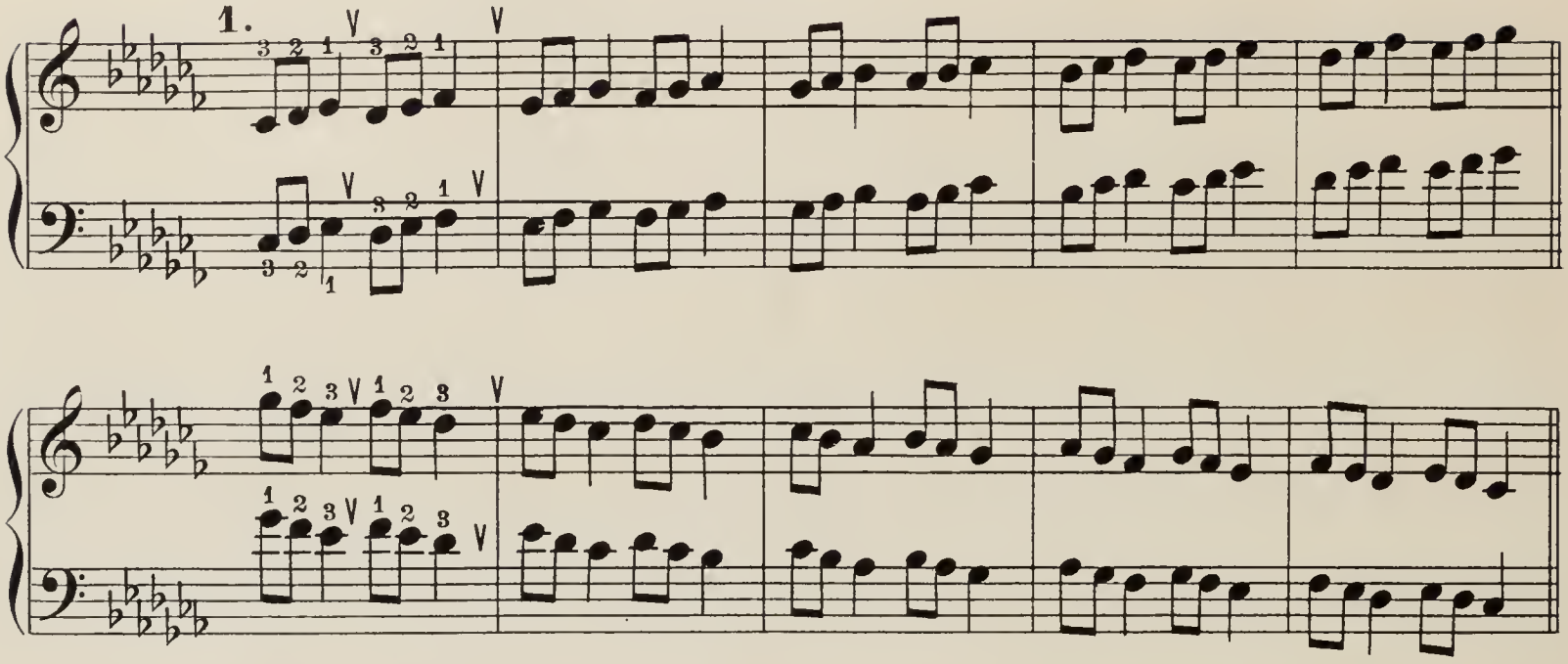


Play these two exercises like the above theme, breaking each chord into sixteenth notes.

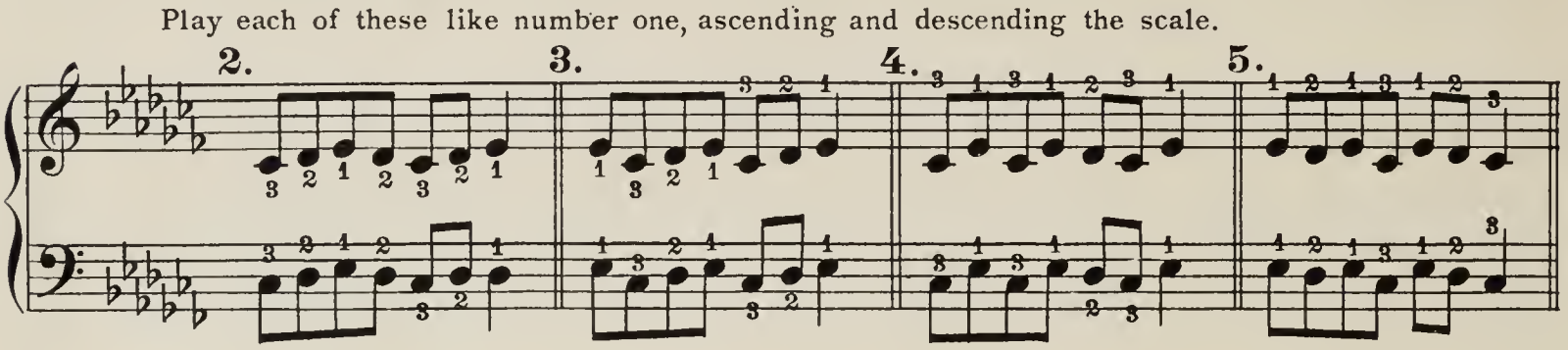


Three Finger Study.

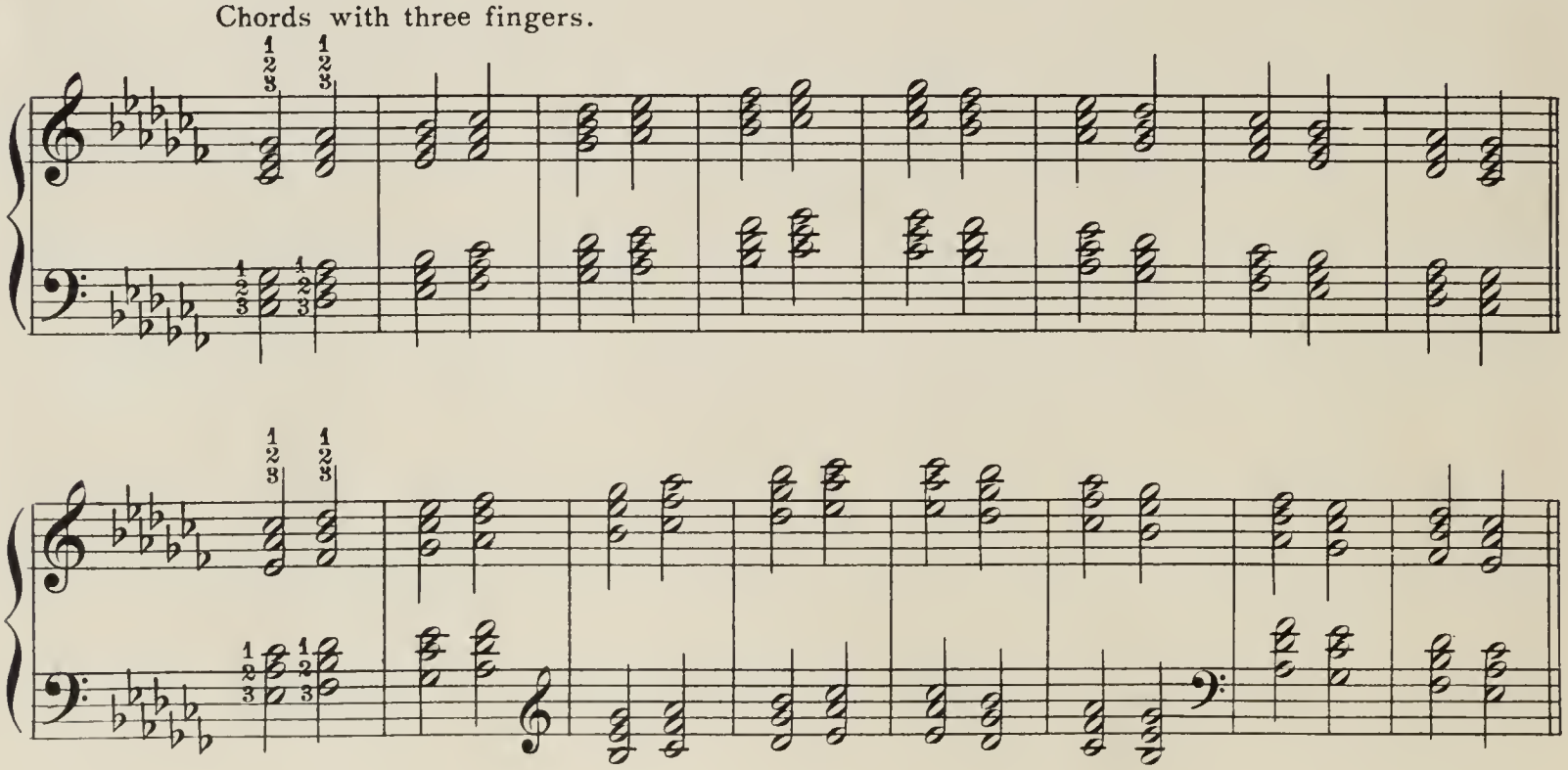
Andantino. *(A little quicker than andante.)*

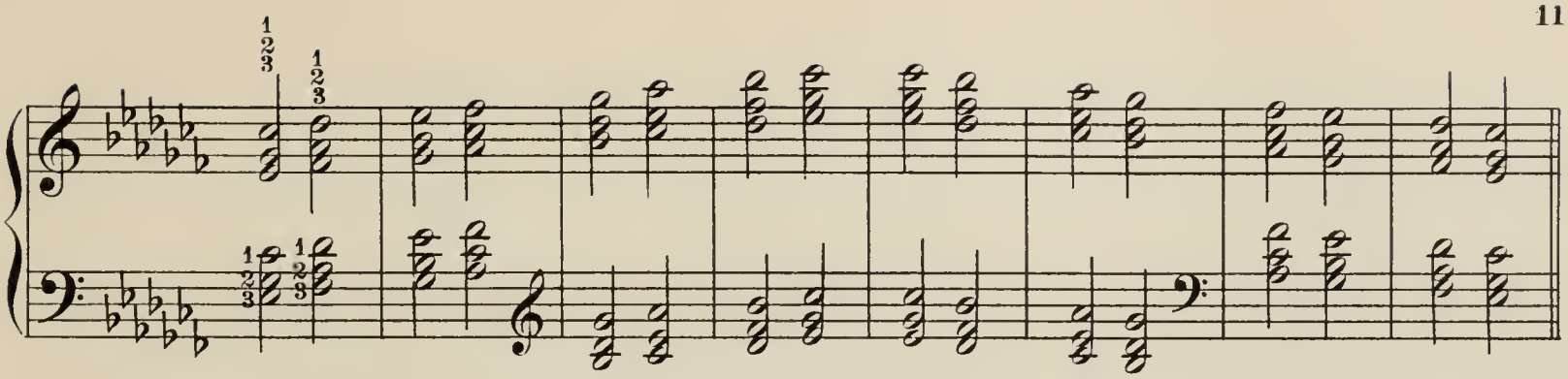


Play each of these like number one, ascending and descending the scale.

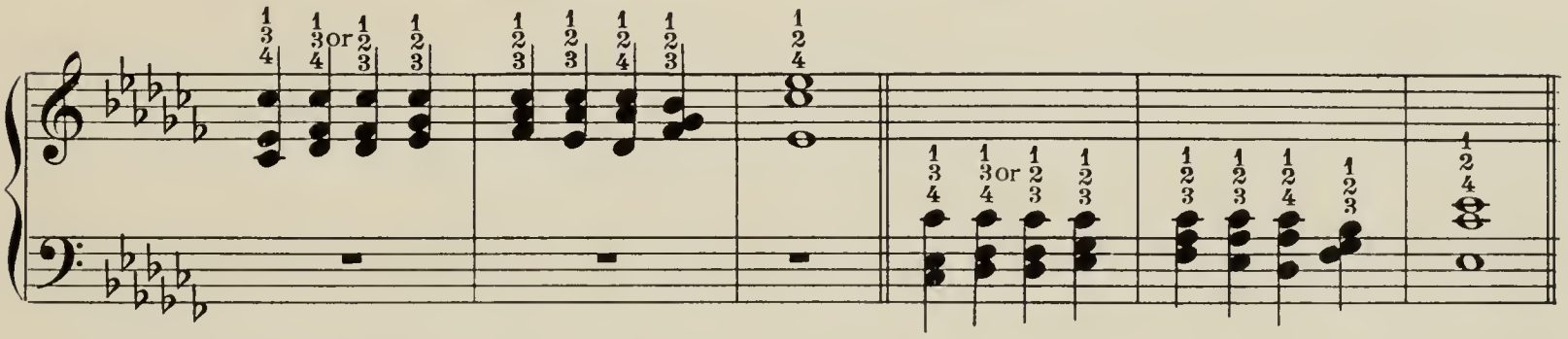


Chords with three fingers.

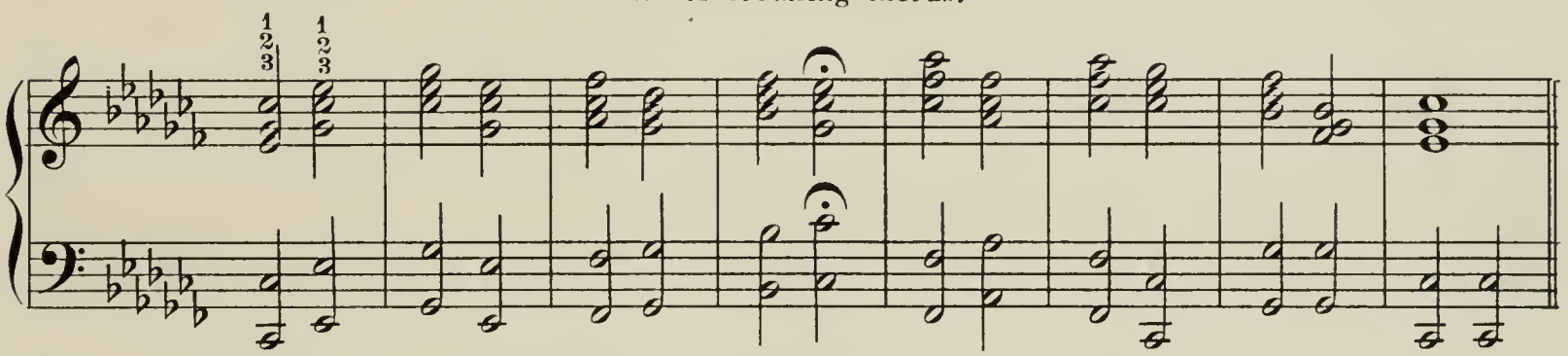




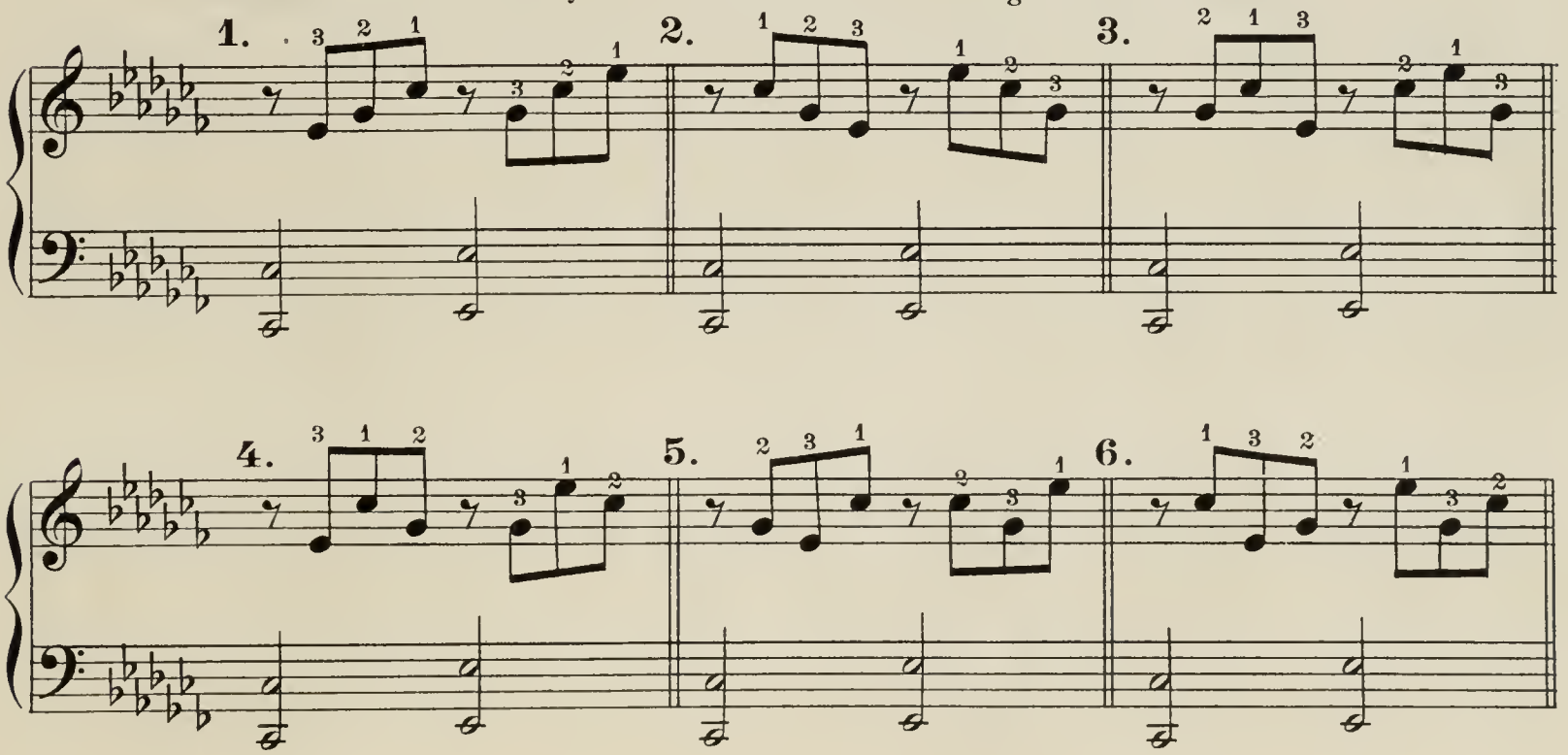
Fingering of different intervals.



THEME. With varied forms of breaking chords.



VARIATIONS. Carry each of these exercises through the above theme.



7. 8.

Exercise with three finger chords in left hand.

VARIATION.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

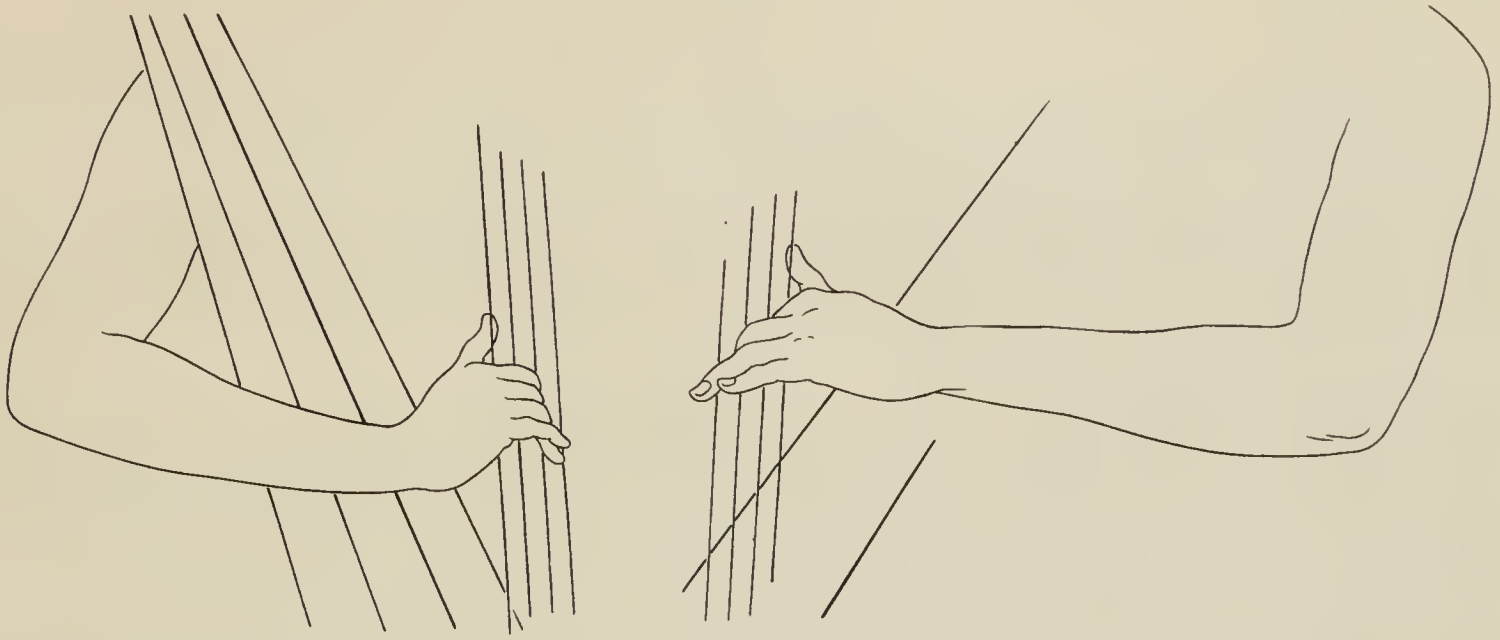
Arpeggio Study.

Position of the right arm.

The elbow must be at right angle with the strings, and the wrist slightly toward the strings.

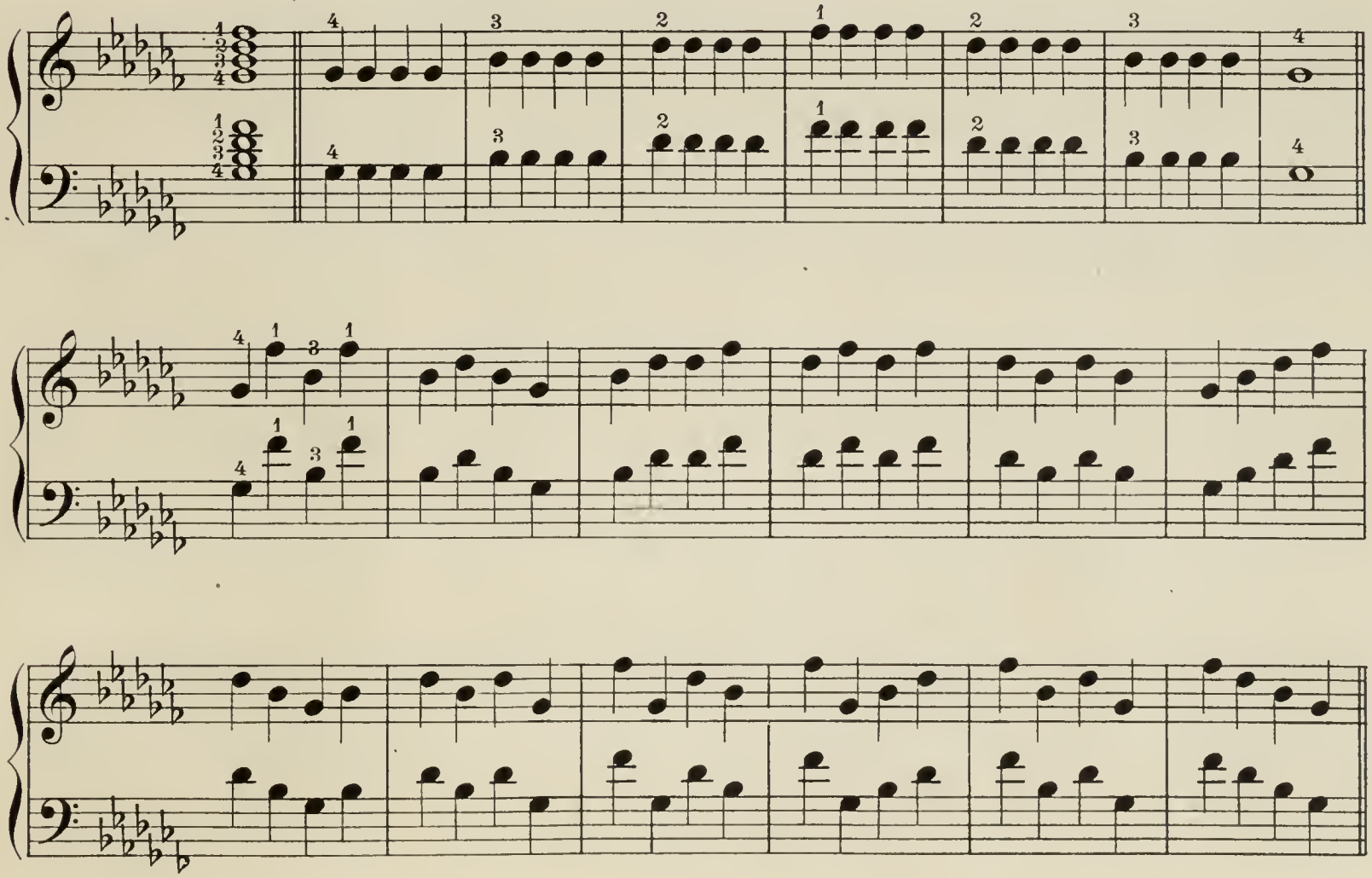
Position of the left arm.

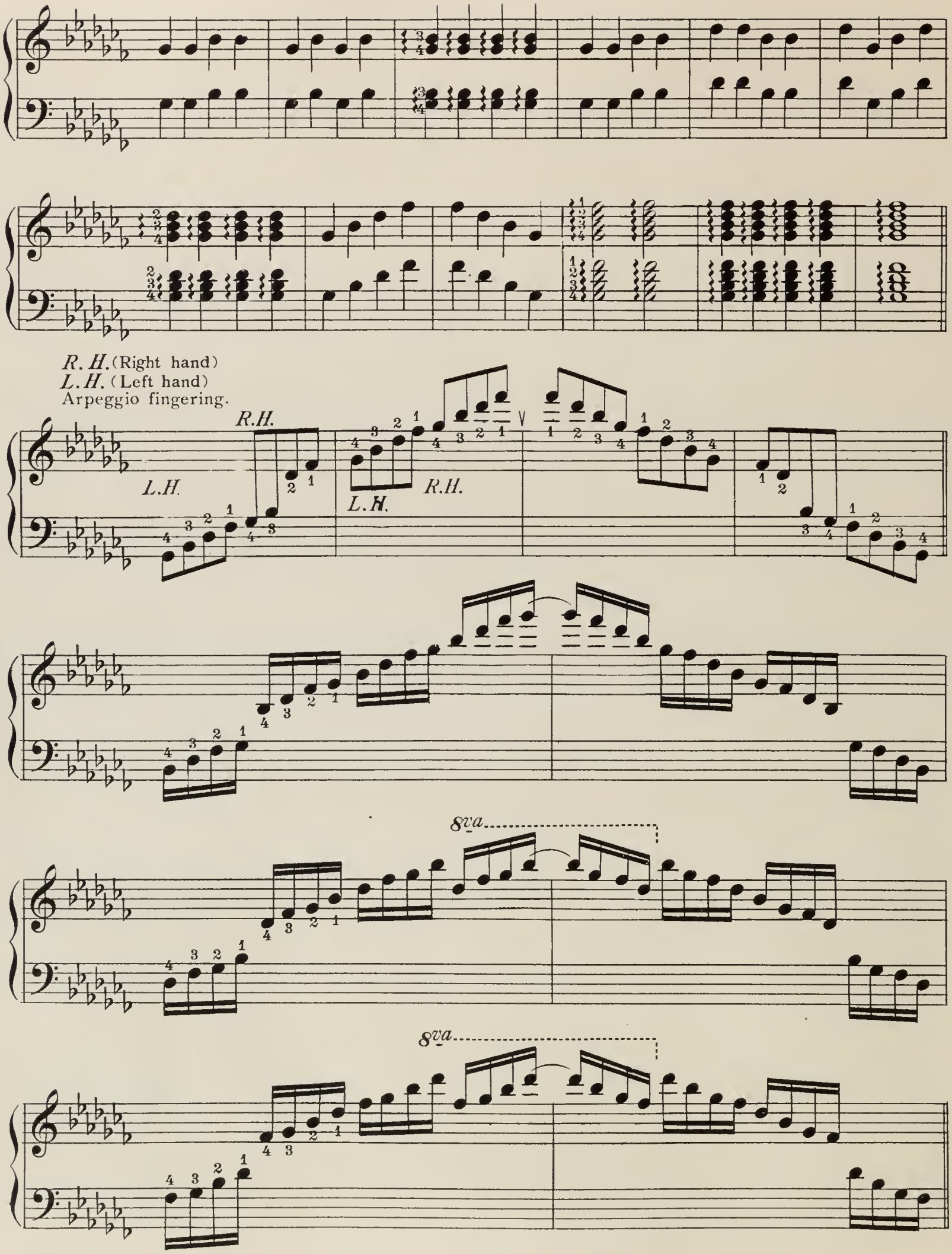
The elbow must be at right angle with the strings, and the wrist straight.



Hold all fingers in position on the strings except the one being used.

Moderato. *(moderately.)*

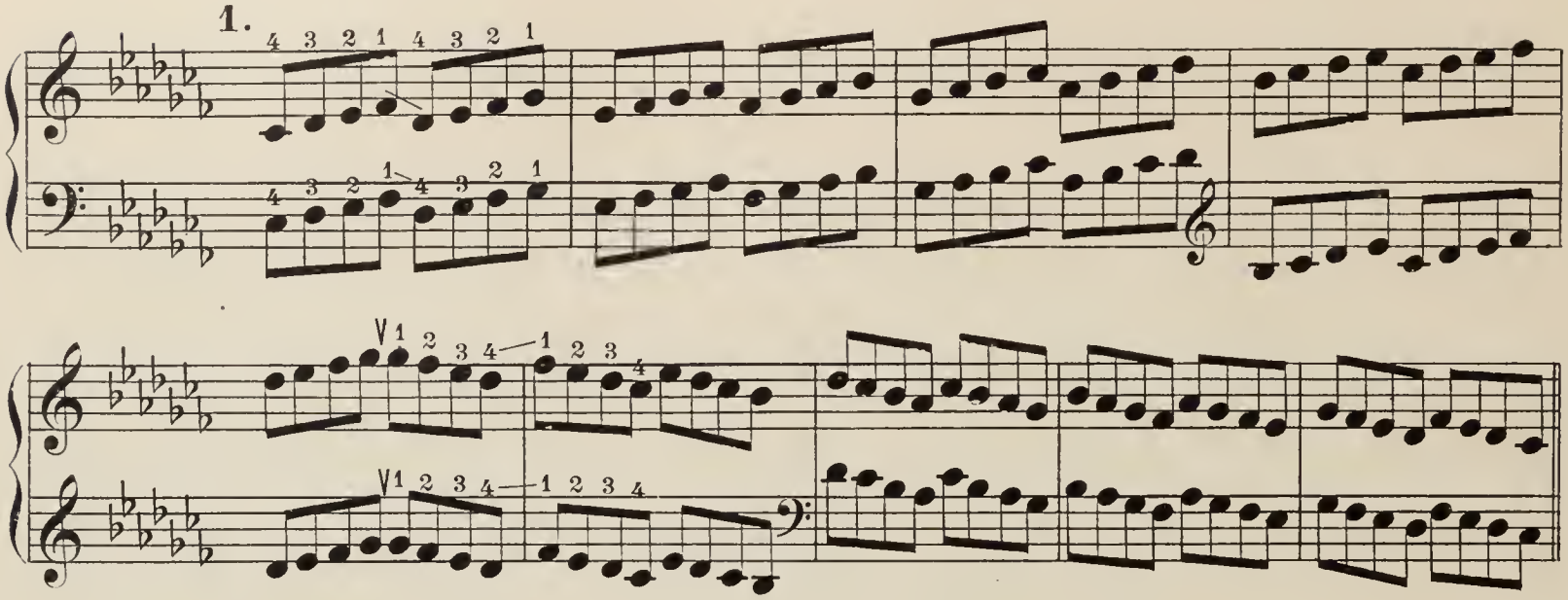



R. H. (Right hand)
L. H. (Left hand)
Arpeggio fingering.
R.H.
L.H.
L.H.
R.H.
8va
8va

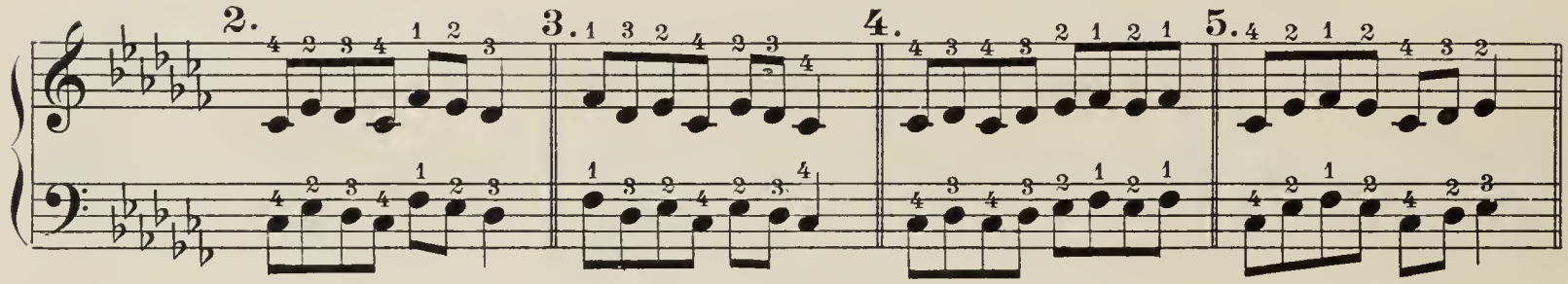
Chords in different positions of fingering.

Four Finger Study.

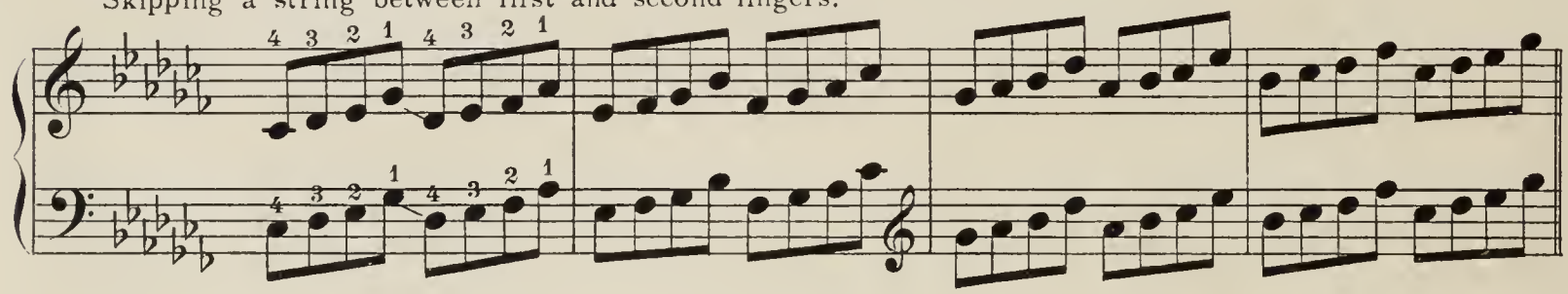
Allegro. *(Lively.)*



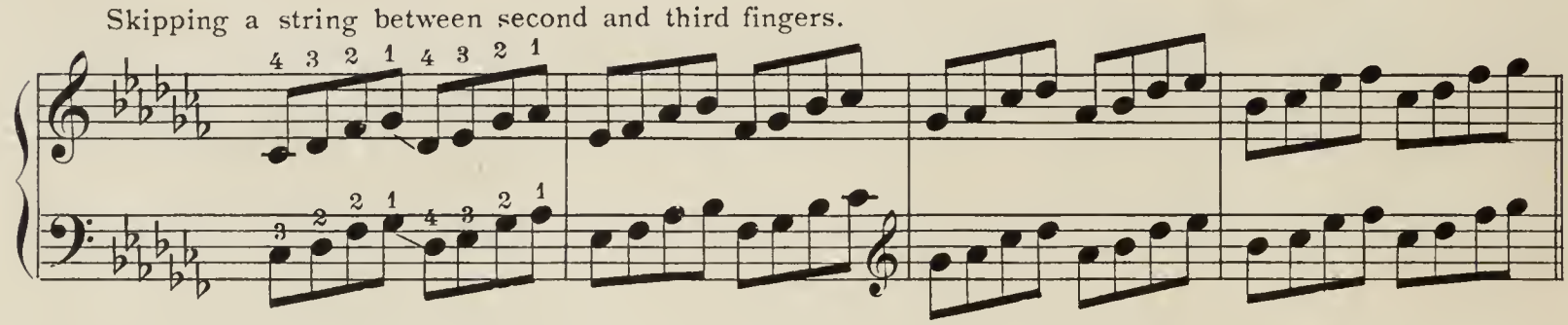
Play each of these like number one, ascending and descending the scale.



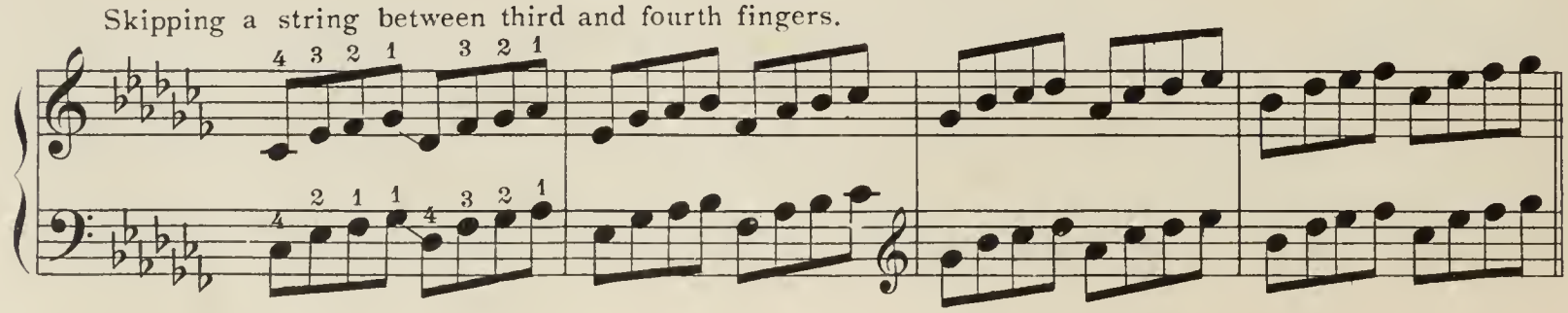
Play the three following exercises descending the scale also.
Skipping a string between first and second fingers.



Skipping a string between second and third fingers.



Skipping a string between third and fourth fingers.



Arpeggios, four octaves.

R.H.

L.H.

R.H.

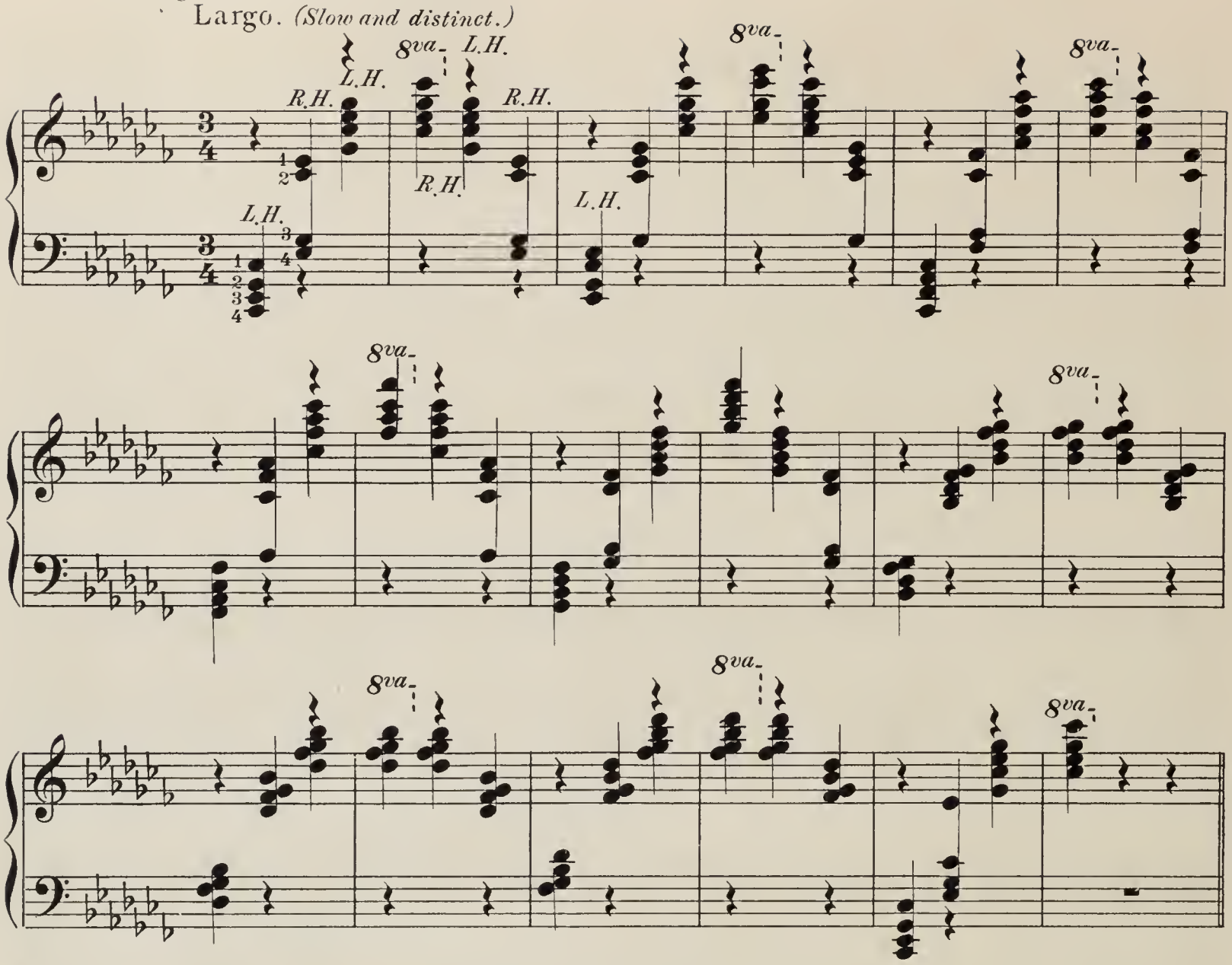
L.H.

R.H.

L.H.

Placing hands one above the other.

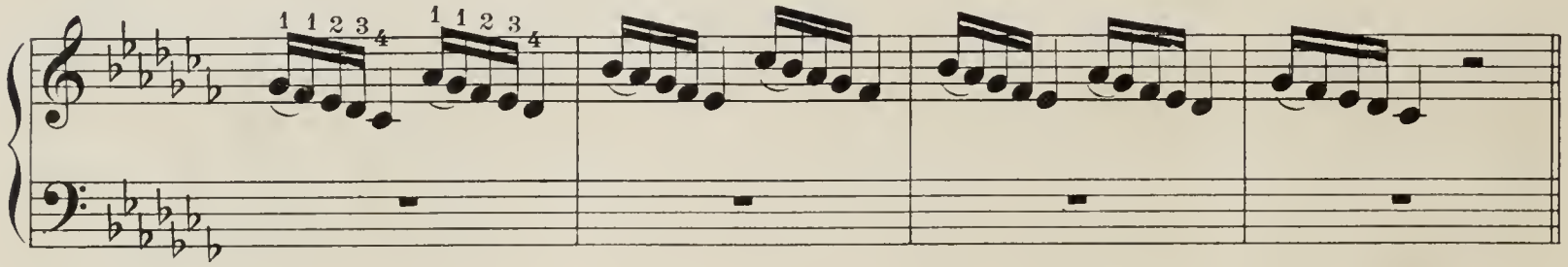
Largo. *(Slow and distinct.)*



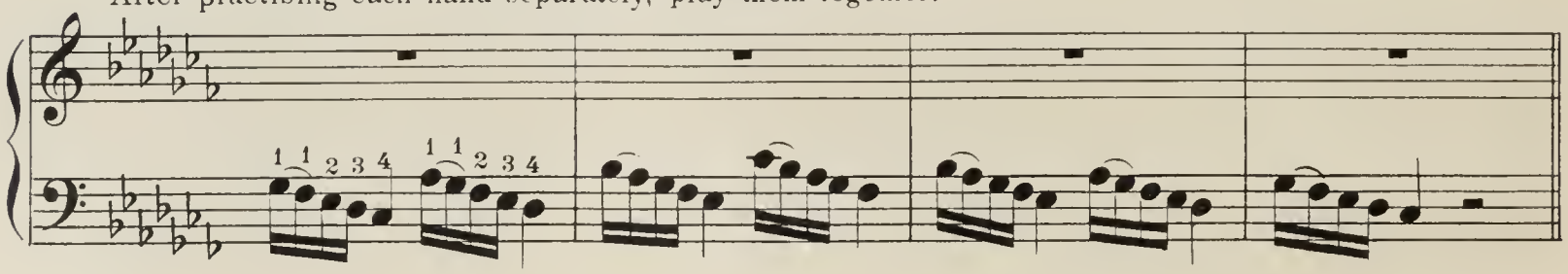
Glissando Study.

LEGATO (Sliding of the fingers smoothly.)

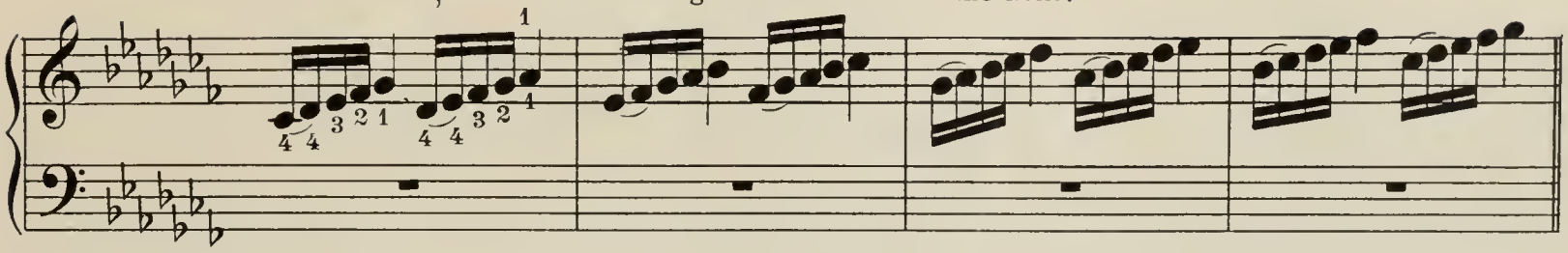
1 1 This mark means to slide the thumb from one note to the next.



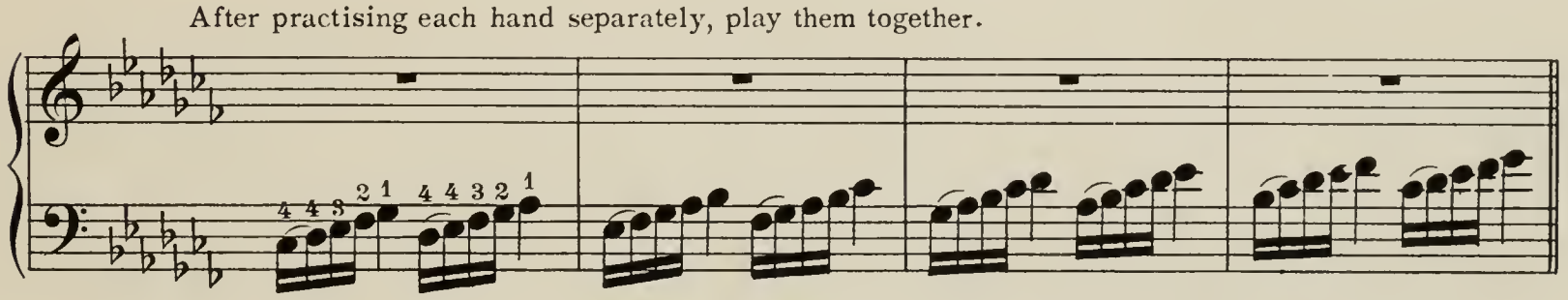
After practising each hand separately, play them together.



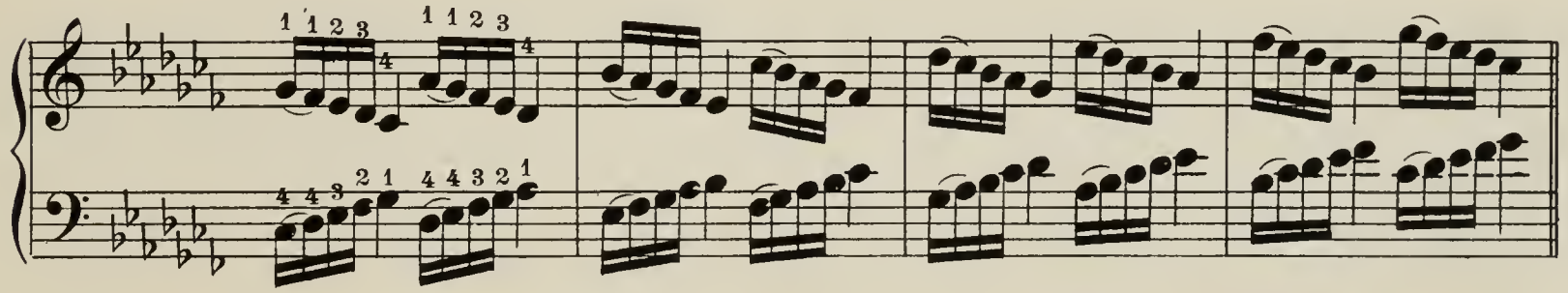
4 4 This mark means, draw the fourth finger from one note to the next.

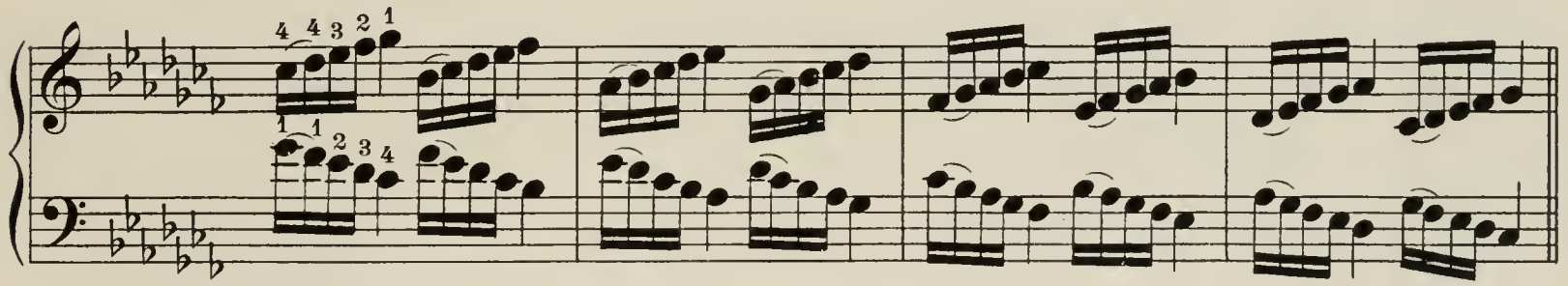


After practising each hand separately, play them together.

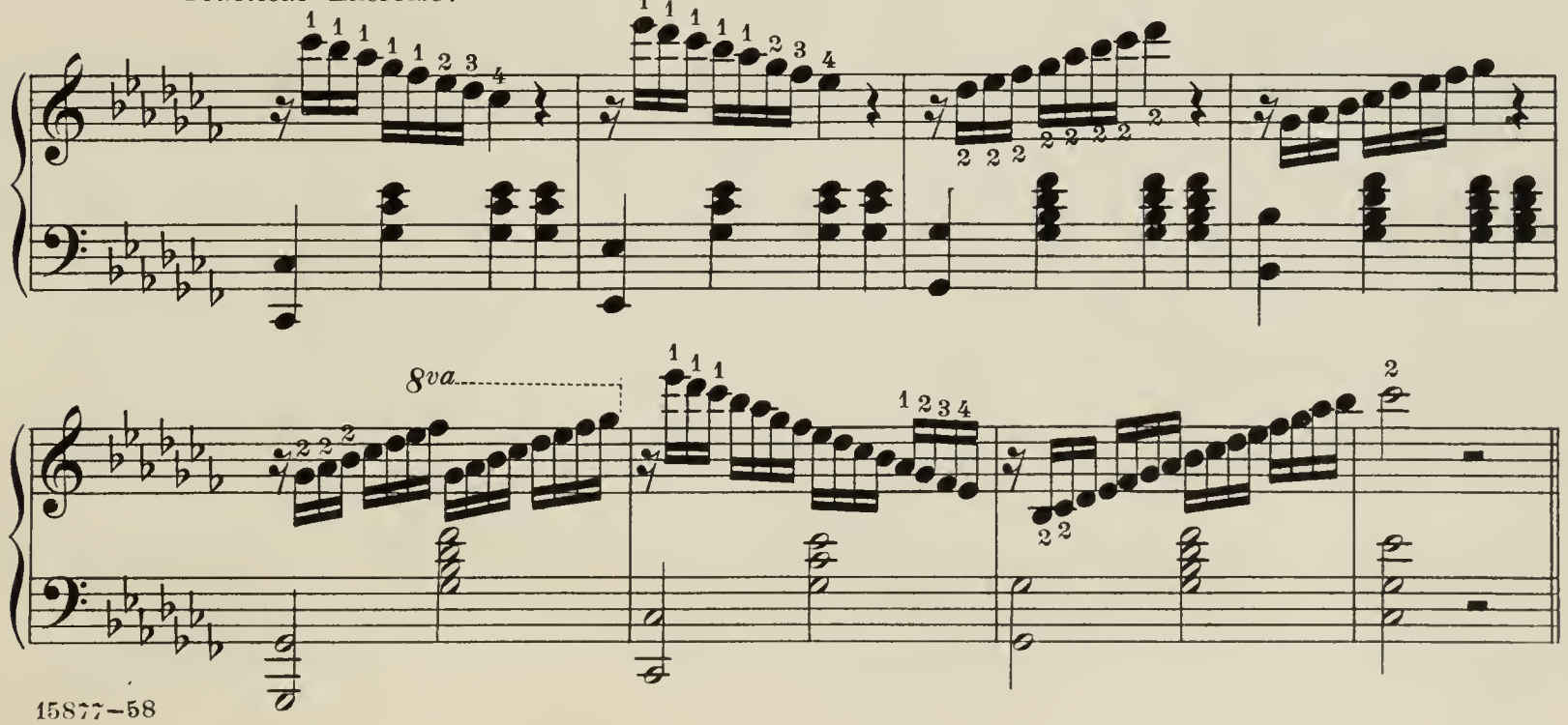


Drawing fingers in opposite directions.





Practical Exercise.



Right hand.

8va

Left hand.

Study of Glissando

Applied to Thirds, Sixths and Octaves.

Exercise in drawing thumb one octave.

Exercise in drawing second and third fingers.

THEME.

Andante amabile. *(Affectionately.)*

8va

loco

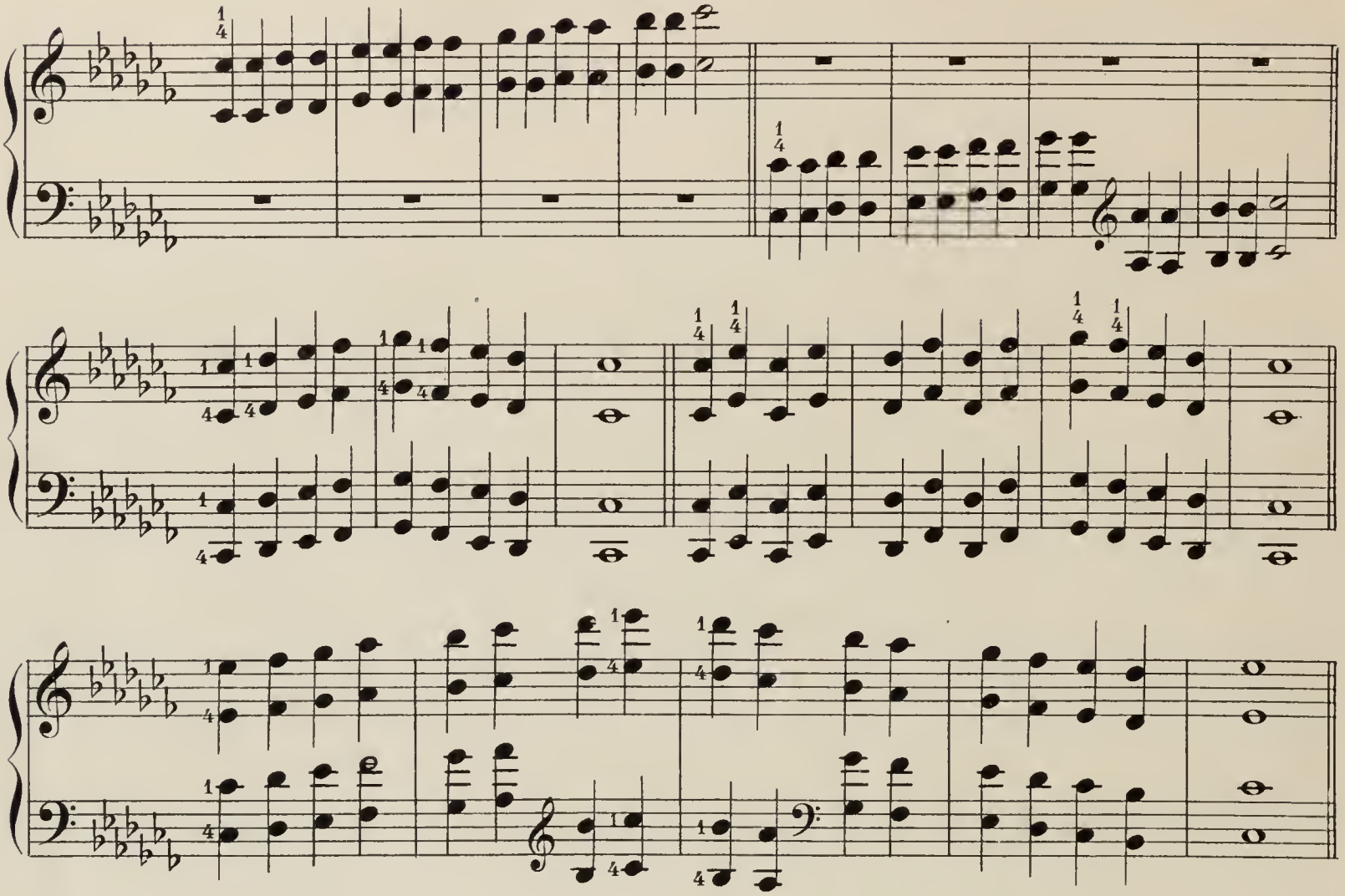
Lay 2-3-4 fingers flat on strings and draw them over.

Exercise in connected fifth and sixth.

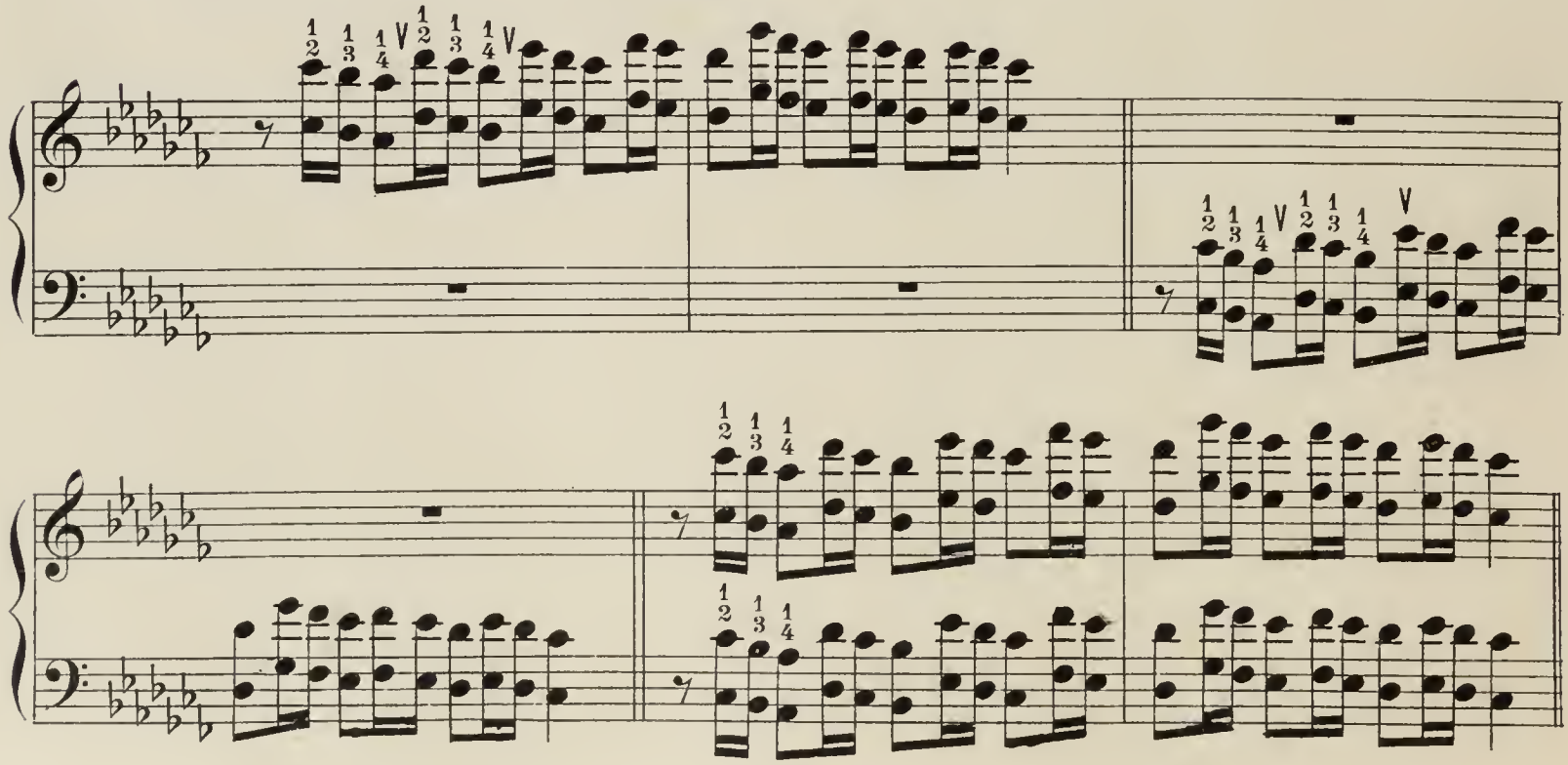
Cantabile. *(In a singing manner.)*

Octave Study.

Keep second and third fingers well in the hand.



Slide the thumb from one string to the next.

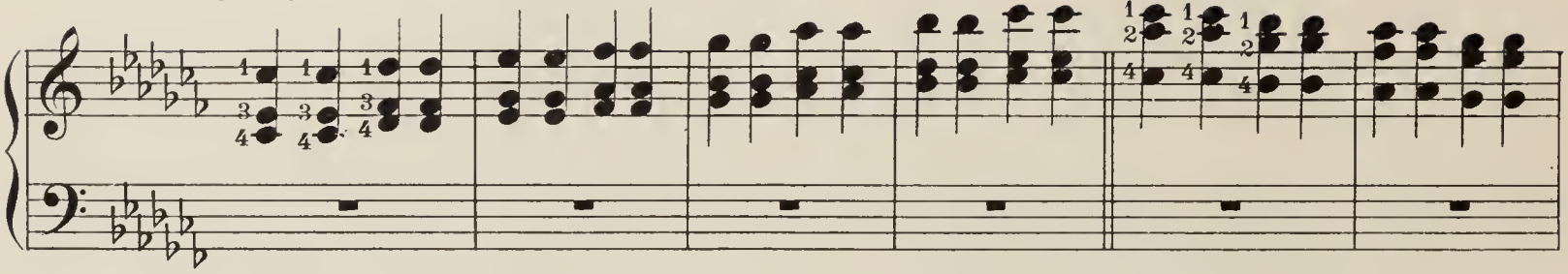


8va

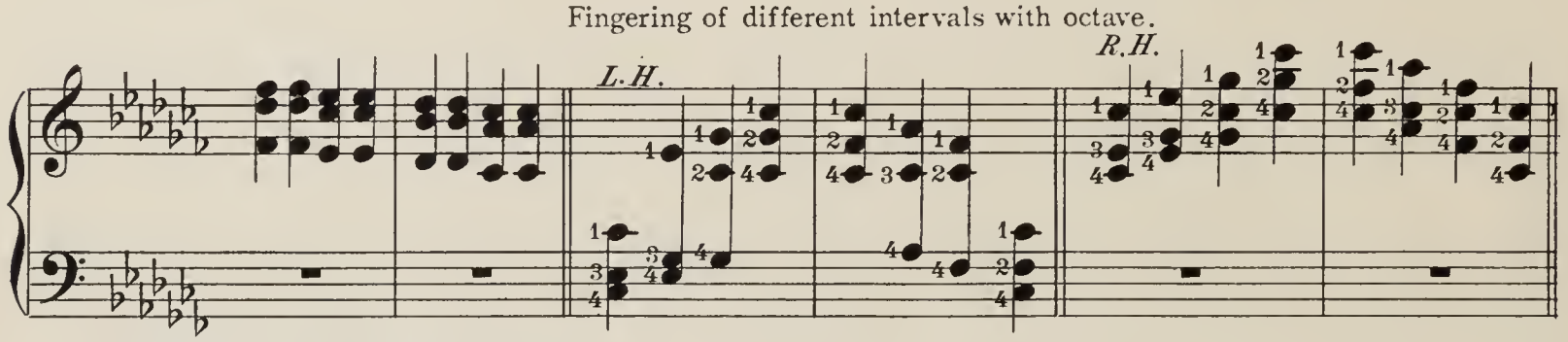
Example of practical use of drawing thumb in octave.

Accord Study.

Fingering of intervals of third with octave.

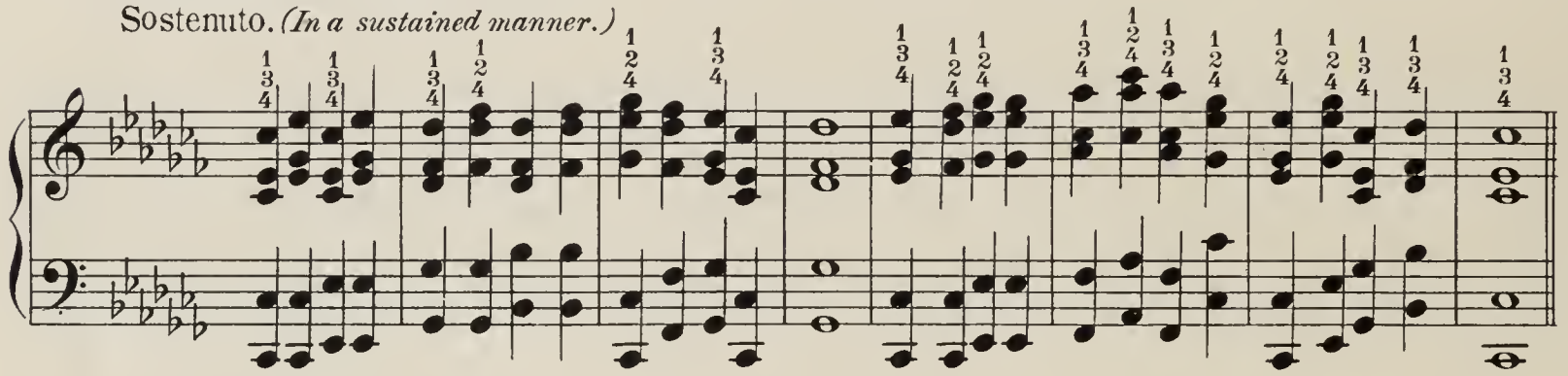


Fingering of different intervals with octave.



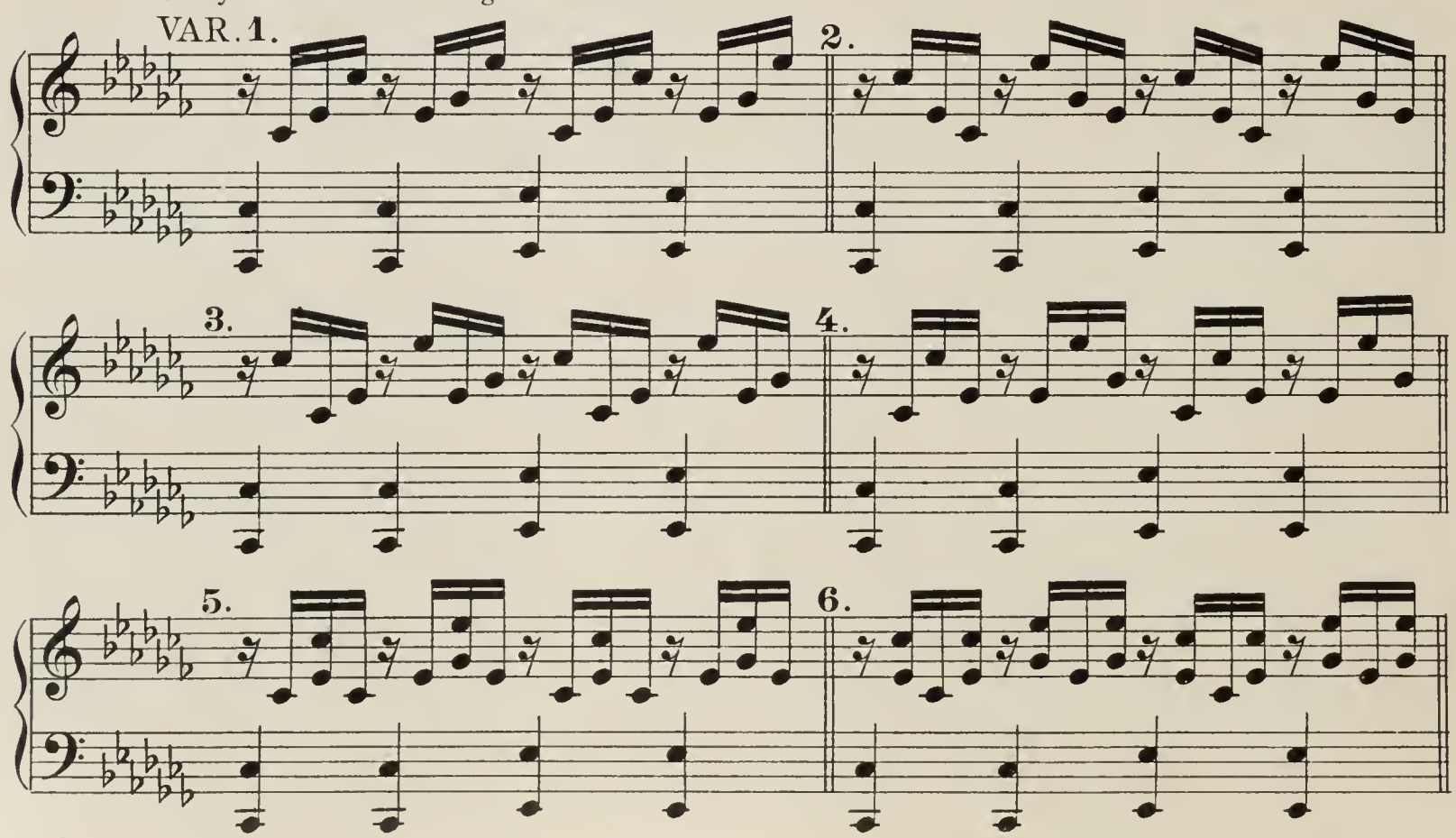
THEME and VARIATION.

Sostenuto. *(In a sustained manner.)*



Carry each of these through the above theme.

VAR. 1.



Rapid Scale Study.

Continue these exercises one octave ascending and descending.

1. 2. 3.

All tones even. No accent.

Accent on the first finger.

Accent on the fourth finger.

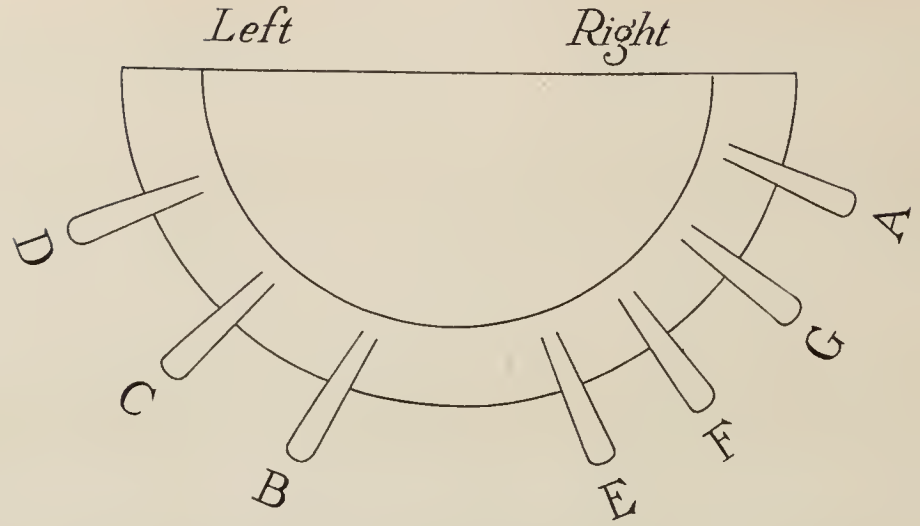
Accent on the third finger.

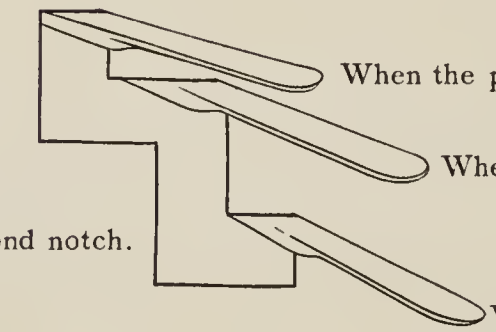
Accent on the second finger.

Pedal Study.

(MODULATION OF KEYS.)

Position of Pedals.



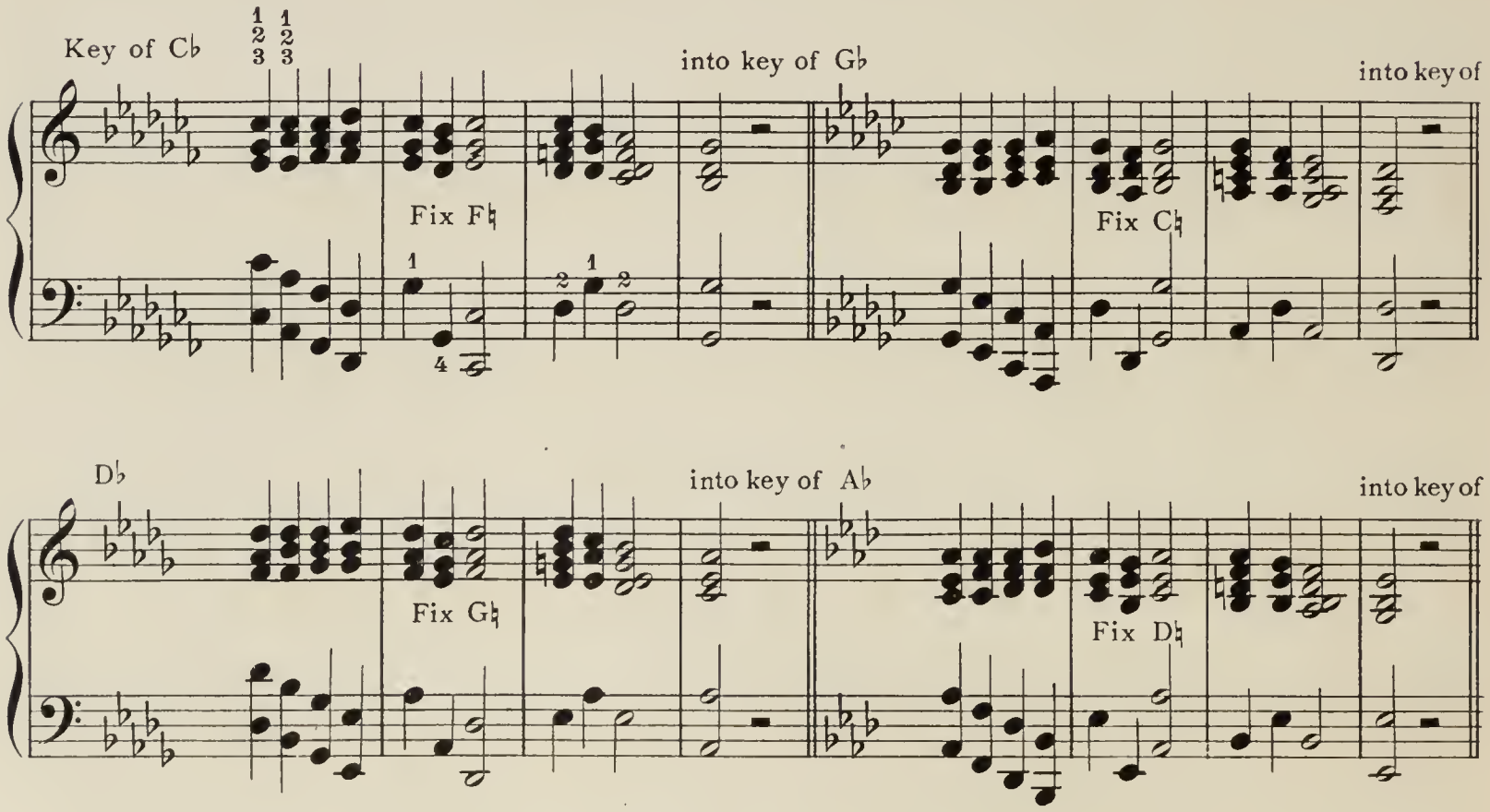


When the pedal is up, the string is open and the tone is flat.

When the pedal is in the first notch the tone is natural.

When the pedal is in the second notch the tone is sharp.

Modulation from the key of C♭ through the flat keys to the key of C



E♭ Fix A♮ into key of B♭ Fix E♮ into key of

F Fix B♮ into key of C

Modulation from the key of C through the sharp keys to the key of C♯.

key of C Fix F♯ into key of G Fix C♯ into key of

D Fix G♯ into key of A Fix D♯ into key of

E Fix A♯ into key of B Fix E♯ into key of

F♯

Fix B♯

into key of C♯

Keys on the same letter have pedals in same position, but one notch lower when corresponding key is a half tone higher.

All pedals up.

All pedals in first notch.

All pedals in second notch.

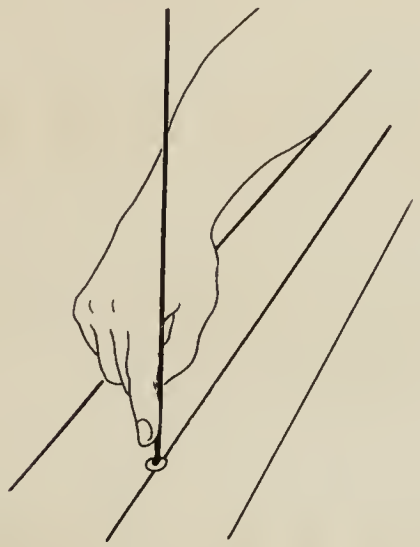
Study of Pres de la Table.

In the following studies there will be an exercise in each of the major keys with a theme in which this special form of technique, demonstrated in the exercise, is used in its practical application.

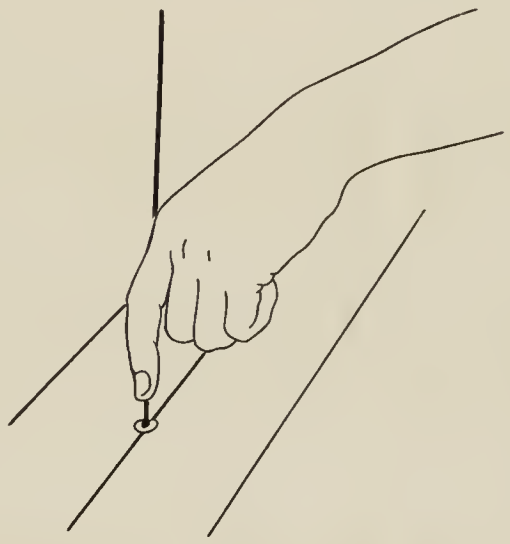
Près de la Table means to play the note at the end of the string nearest the sounding board, with the end of the second finger where single notes are used, and with the second and third fingers where two notes are used together.

The tension of the string is greater here, and considerable strength should be used.

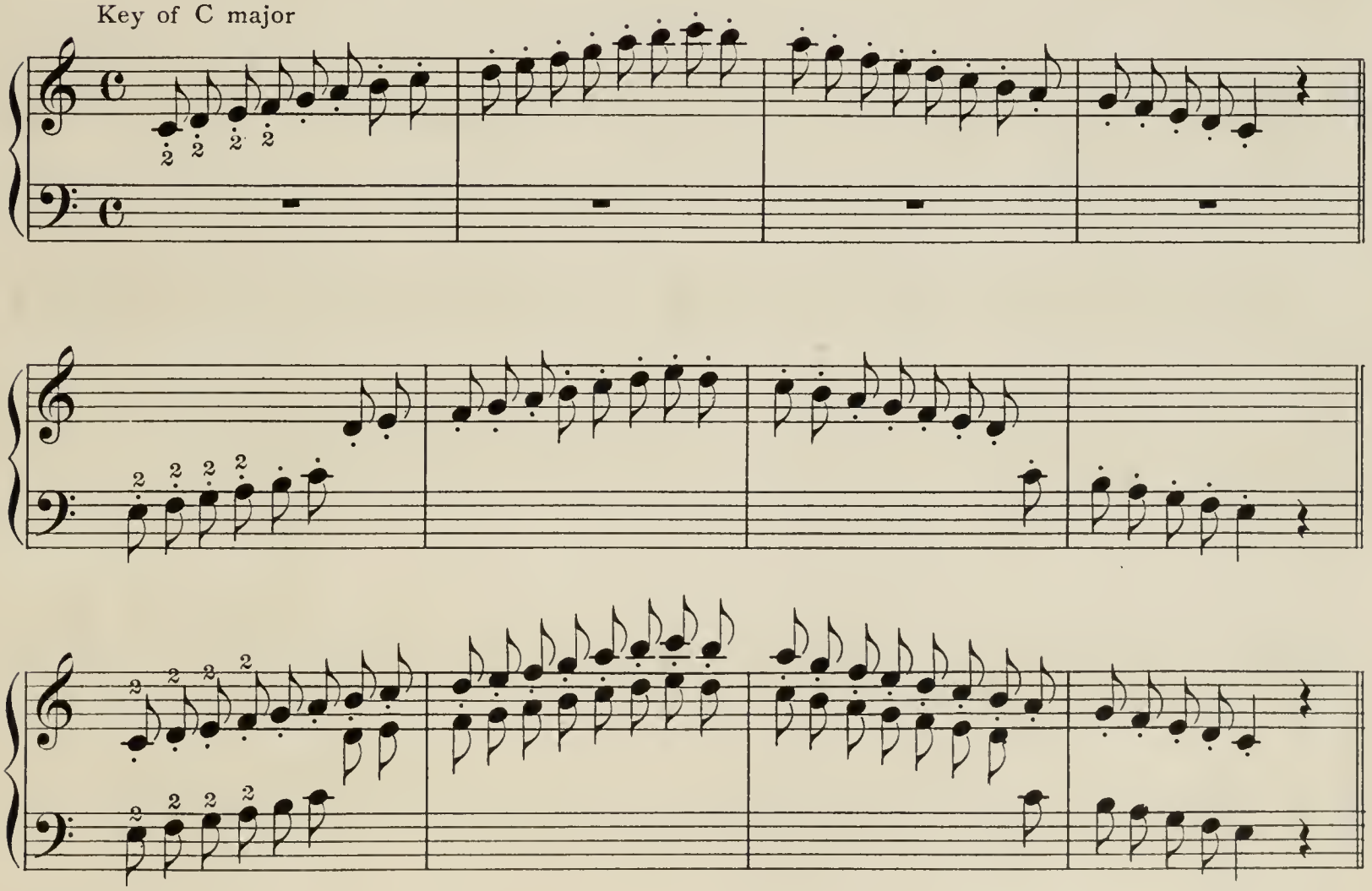
Position of right hand.

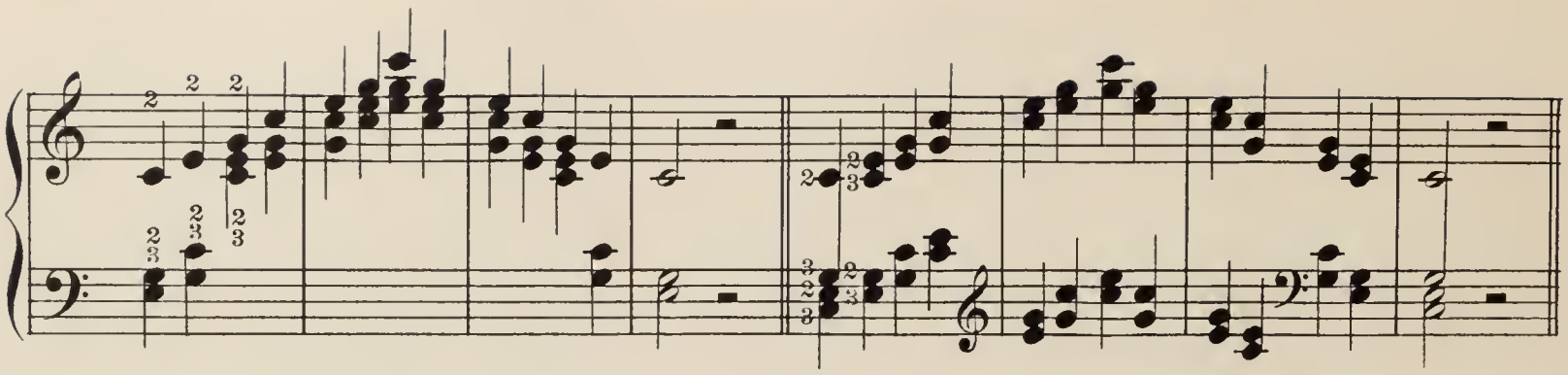


Position of left hand.



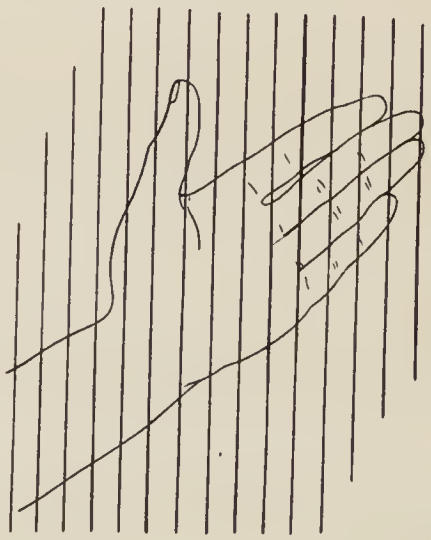
Key of C major





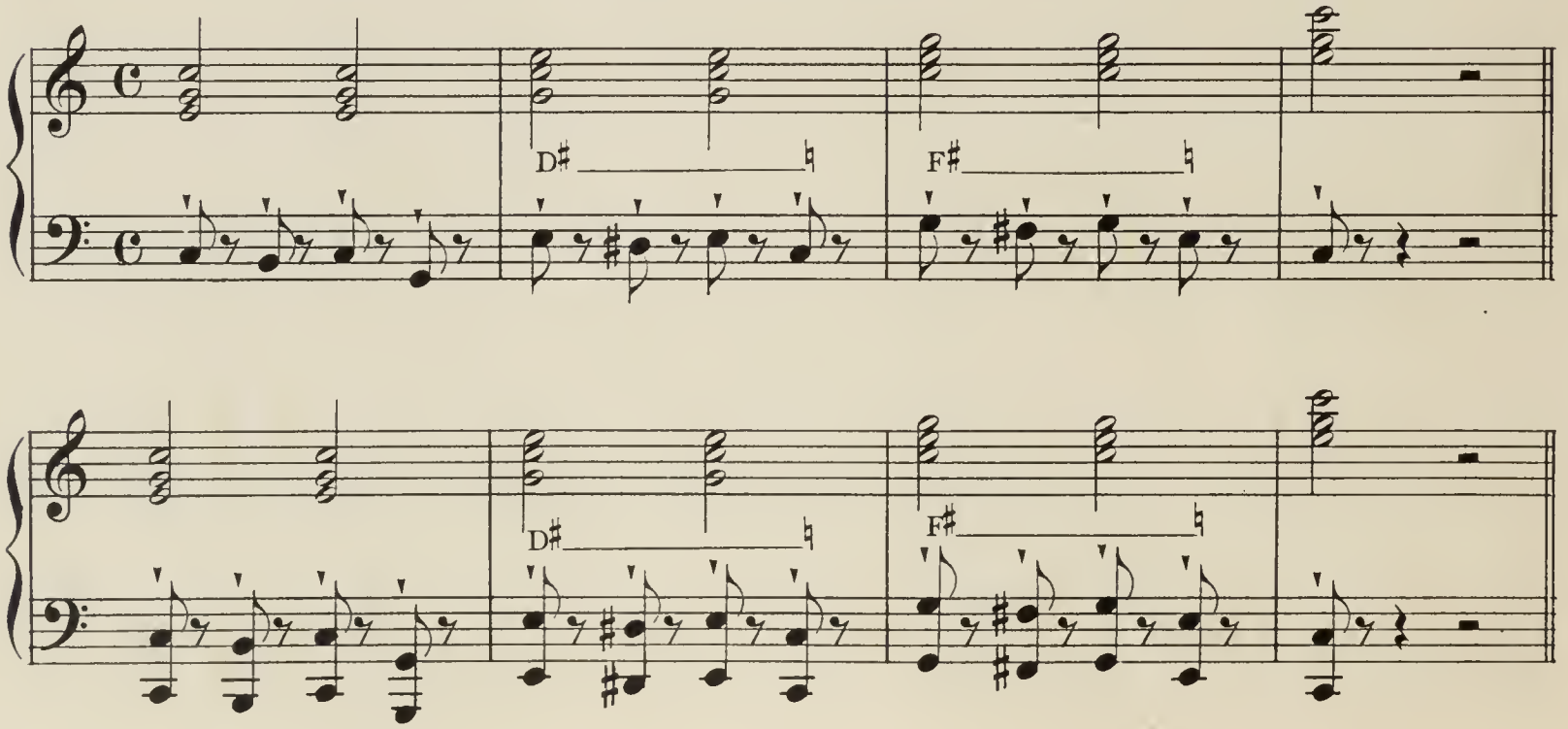
Étouffé Study.

Étouffé position.



⊕ or ▾ Étouffé sign over or under notes means to stifle or smother them with the palm of the hand after playing. > Sign means to play chord sharply together.

Staccato sign • means dainty short tone and often played En table (at the sounding board.) Chords marked thus ⊕ are struck with the flat hand after being played.



R.H. en table.

Deciso. *(Decisively.)*

rit.

a tempo

G♯ G♮

en table.

F♯

C♯ F♮ C♮

Study in Legato Touch and Crossing Hands.

Play in the middle of the strings and move the hand directly from one chord to the next.
Key of F major.

R.H. exercise.

L.H. exercise.

Exercise in crossing the hands.

L.H.

R.H.

L.H.

MELODY

Con moto. *(With motion.)*

Press right hand toward the left side and play very smoothly.

pp

B♭ *pp*

L.H. *L.H.* *L.H.*

mf *R. H.* *cresc.* *f* *rit.*

p *p*

p *dim.* *pp* *rit.*

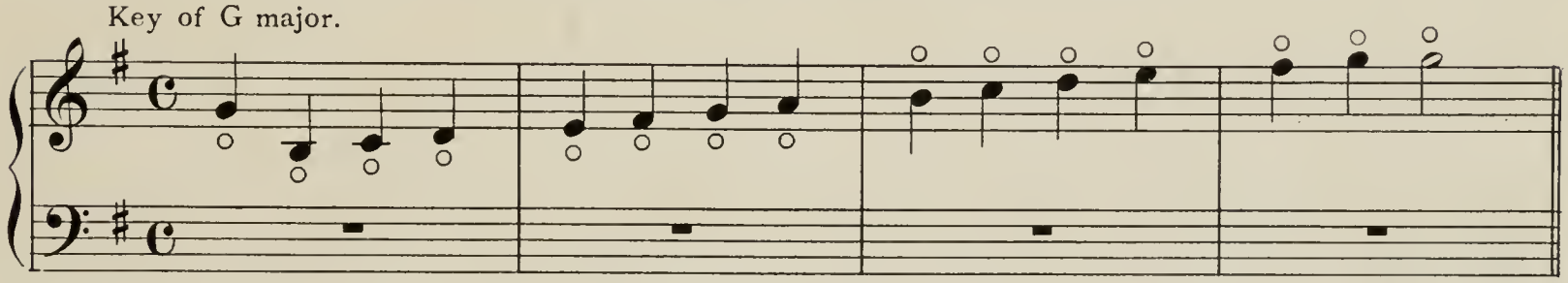
Harmonic Study

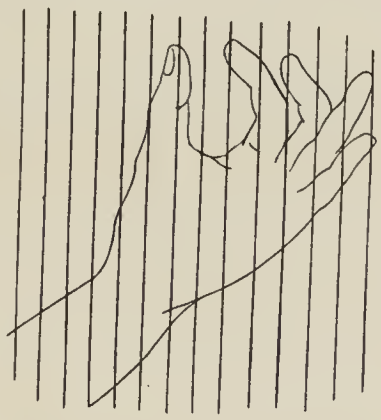
Harmonic position of right hand.

○ Harmonic sign over or under the note.

The harmonic in the R. H. is made by closing the hand and placing the string between the first and second joints of the second finger, pressing it firmly while the thumb plays the note.

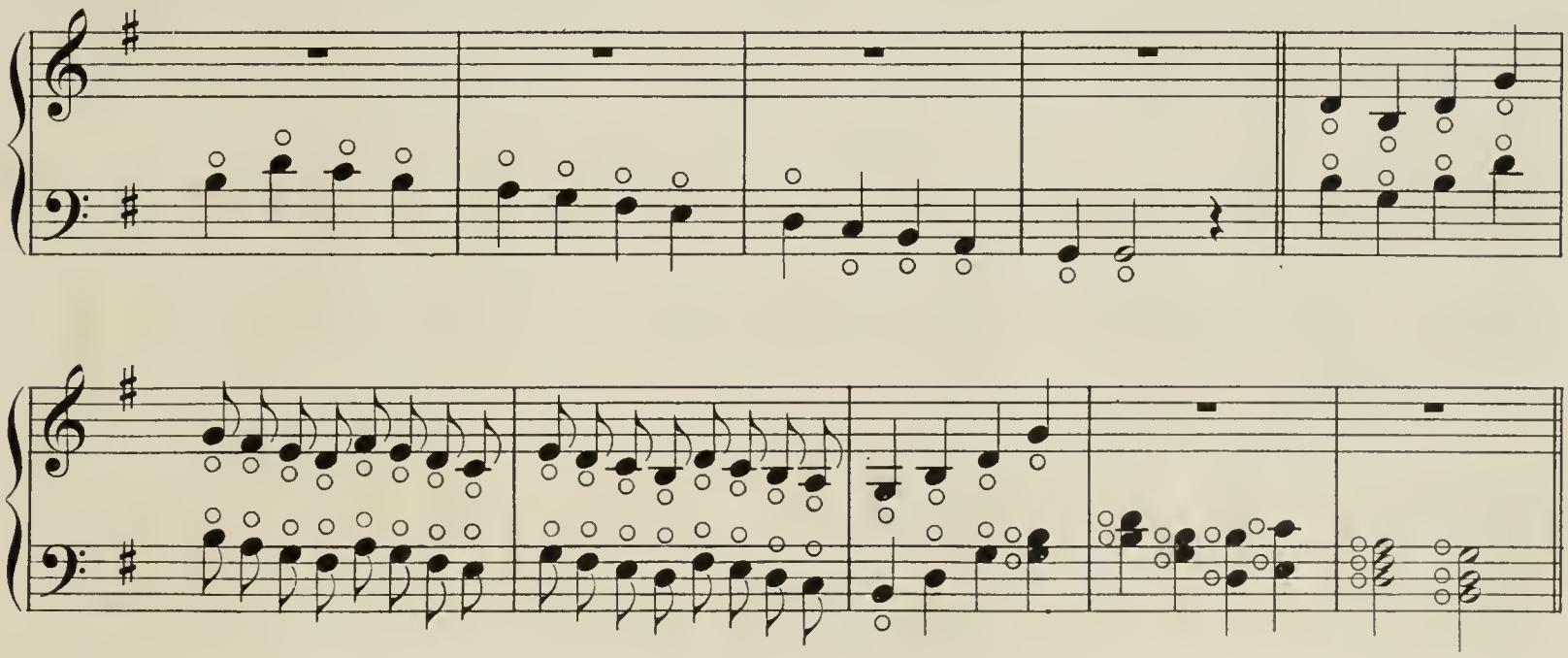
Key of G major.





Harmonic position of left hand.

The harmonic in the L. H. is made by pressing the string firmly with the side of the hand, while playing the string, and turning the hand from you as you play the note.



The Bells of Shandon.

Rev. FRANCIS MAHONY.

Study of Arpeggios and Synonyms

In playing arpeggios be careful to place the fingers from one note to the next, having the following note prepared before the first is played.

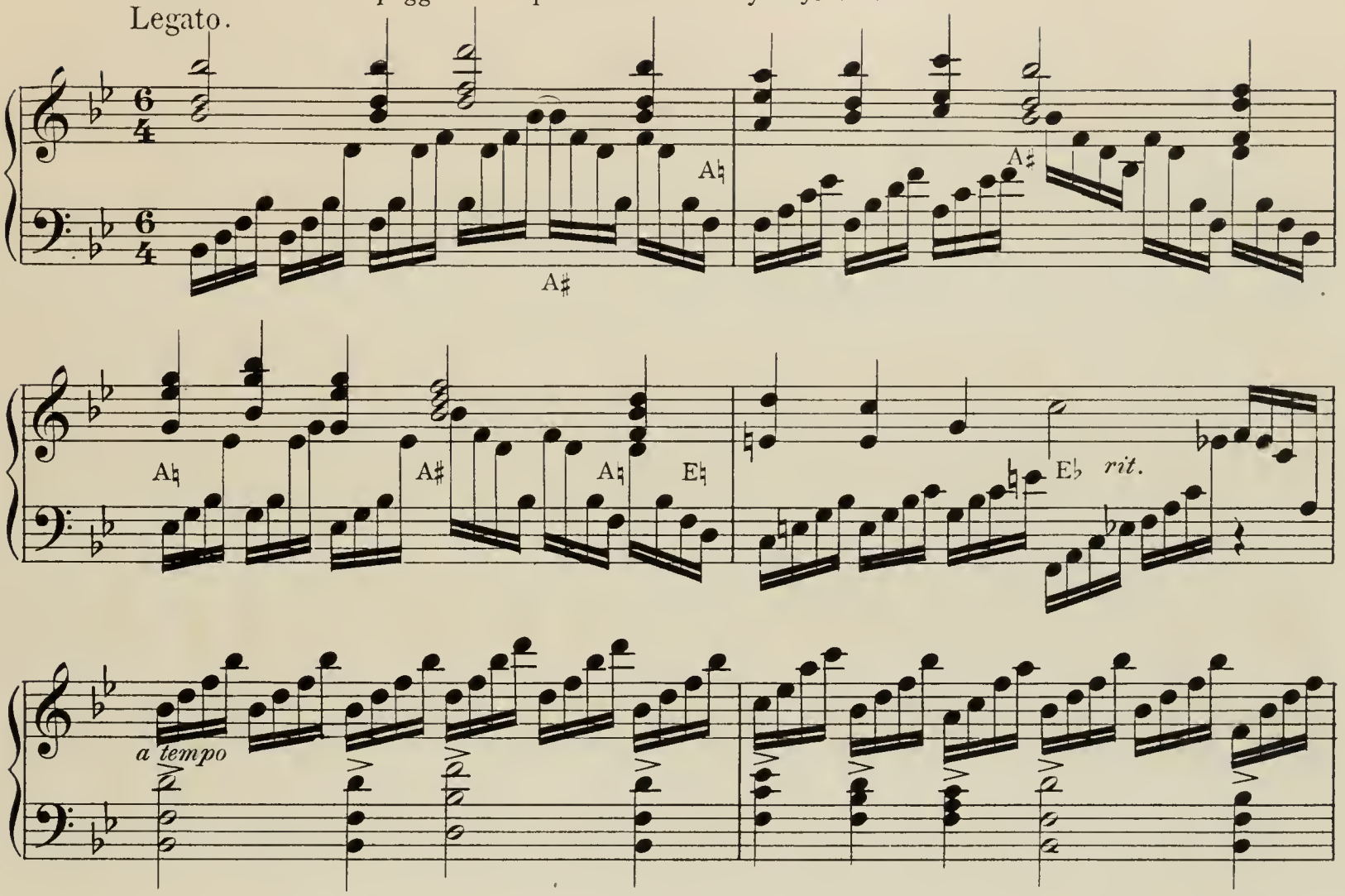
When the same tone is produced on different strings it is called a synonym.

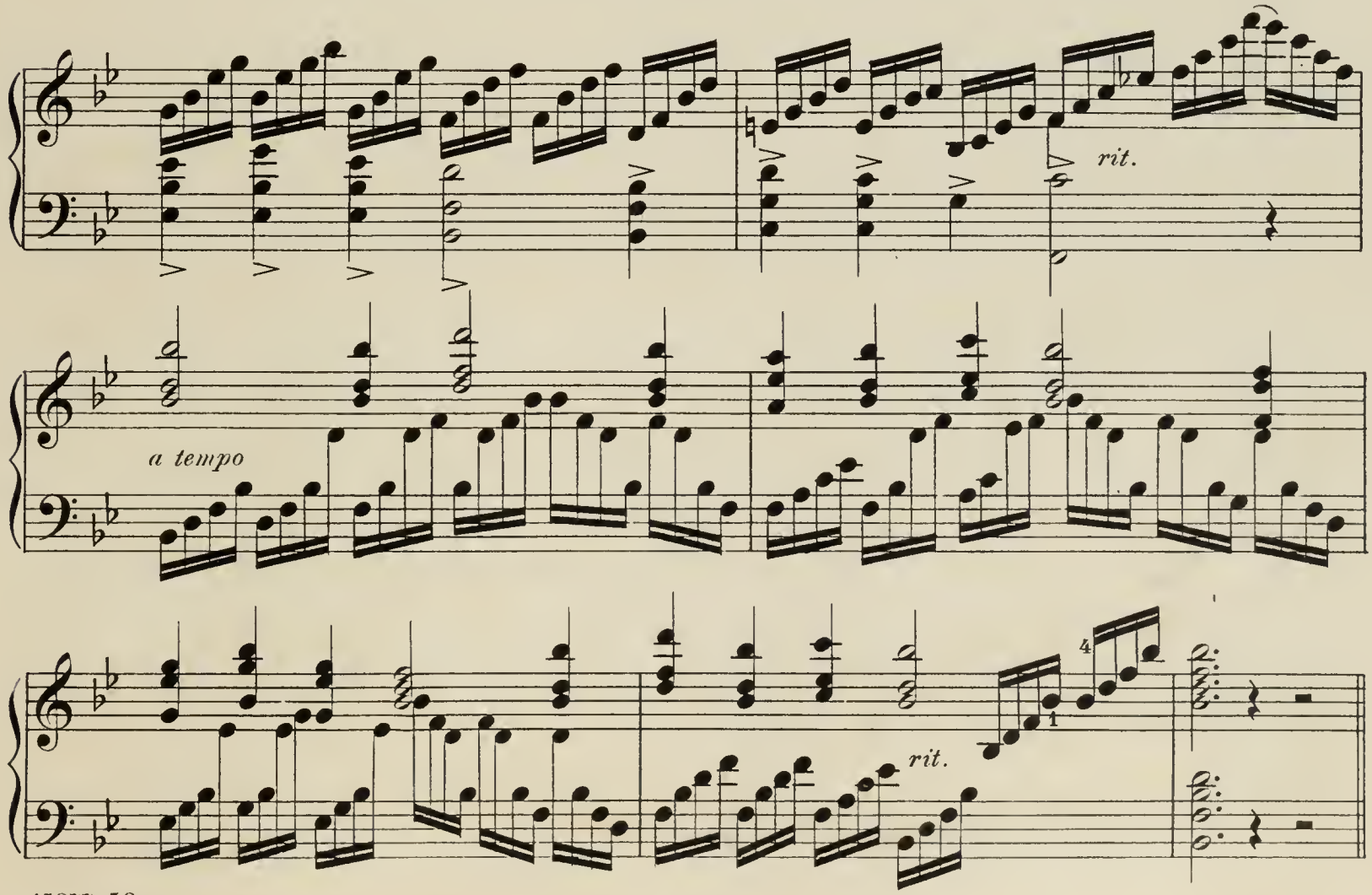
Where notes are repeated, as in the following exercise, for instance, B♭ is played twice in succession, set the A♯ pedal, and play the second B♭ on the A string.

Key of B♭ major.

THEME. with Arpeggio accompaniment and the synonyms used.

Legato.

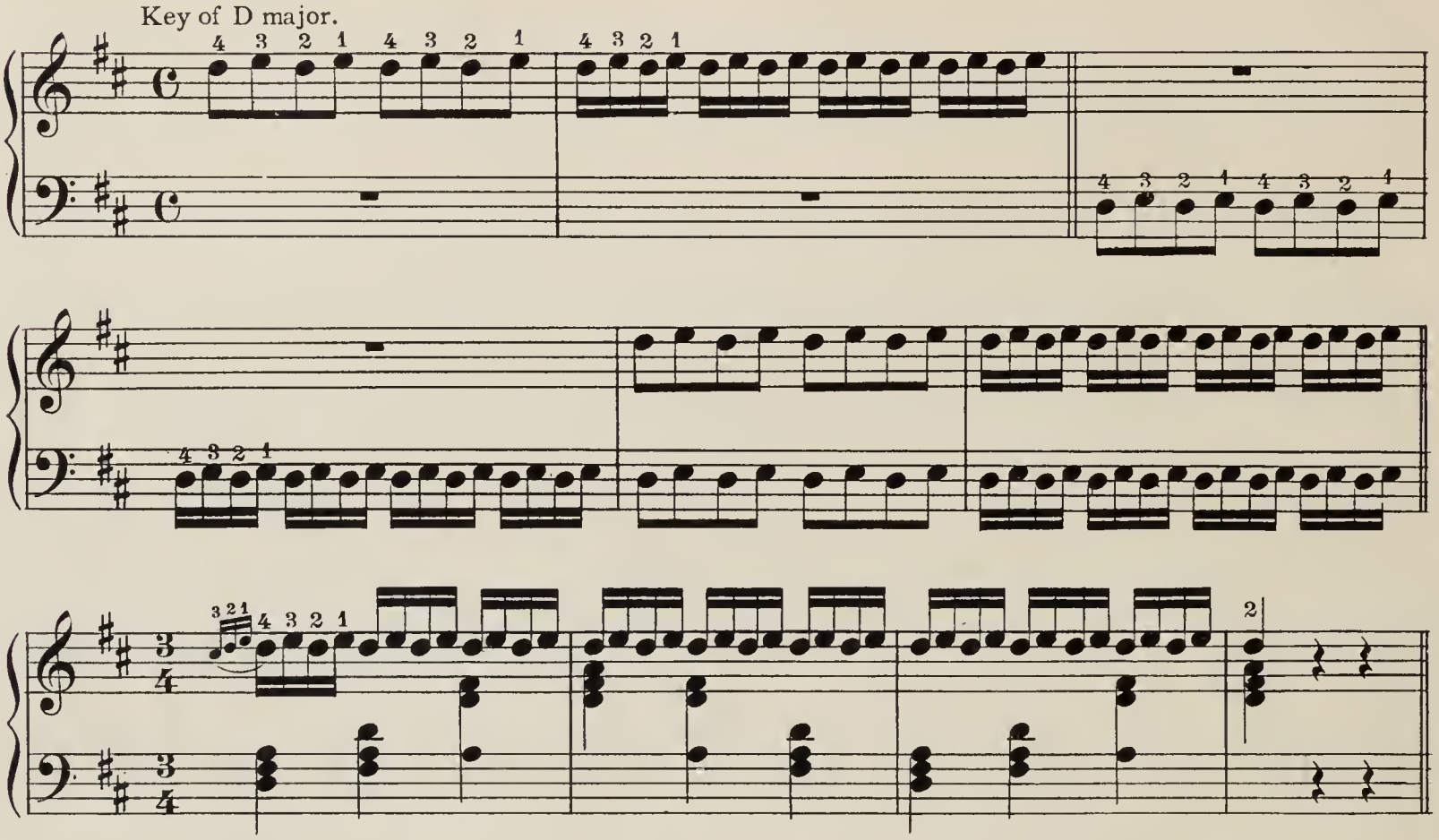




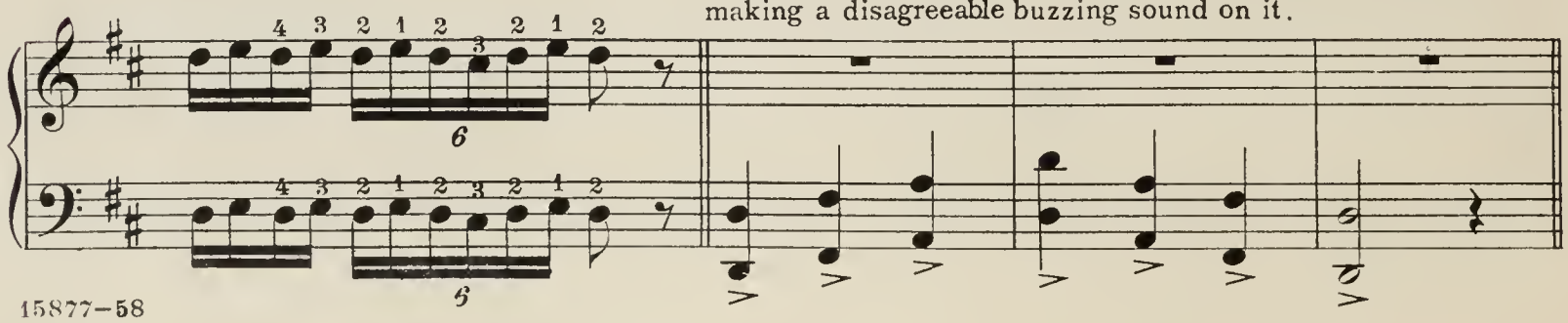
Trill Study.

To play the trill, point the fingers well down and the thumb up, and be careful to replace the fourth finger as far down on the string as possible.

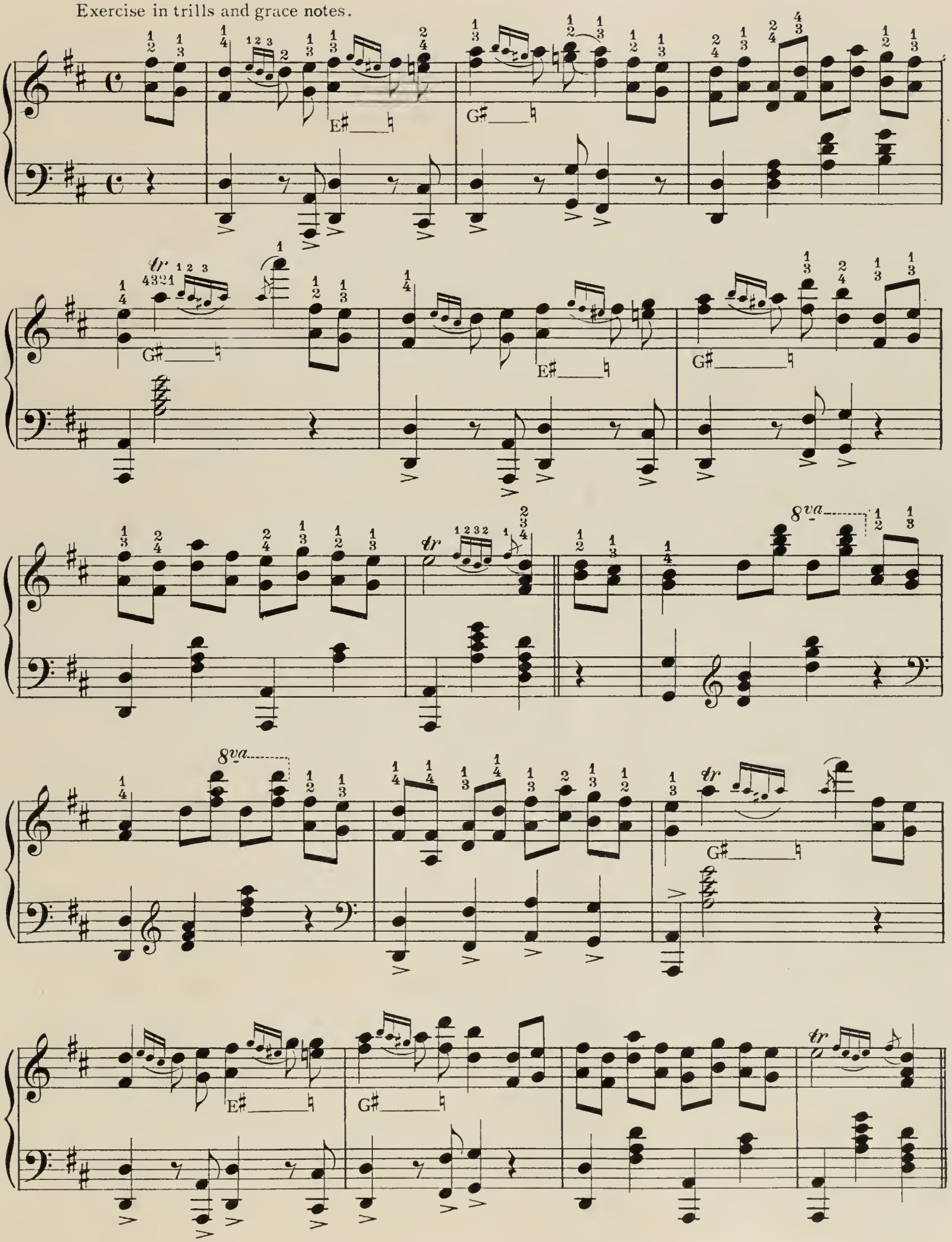
Key of D major.



When octaves for the left hand are marked thus (>) use the open hand flat over the strings and well above the middle of the strings. This will give a positive tone without striking the next string and making a disagreeable buzzing sound on it.



Exercise in trills and grace notes.



Study of Arpeggios as Embellishments for Themes.

Key of E♭ major.

8va

8va

8va

Groves of Blarney.

(Last Rose of Summer.)

THOMAS MOORE.

Arr. by Gertrude Ina Robinson.

Andante sostenuto.

B♭

ff

En table

B♭

a tempo.

VARIATION.

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

D♯

D♮

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

ff

En table.

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

8va

ff

8va

8va

8va

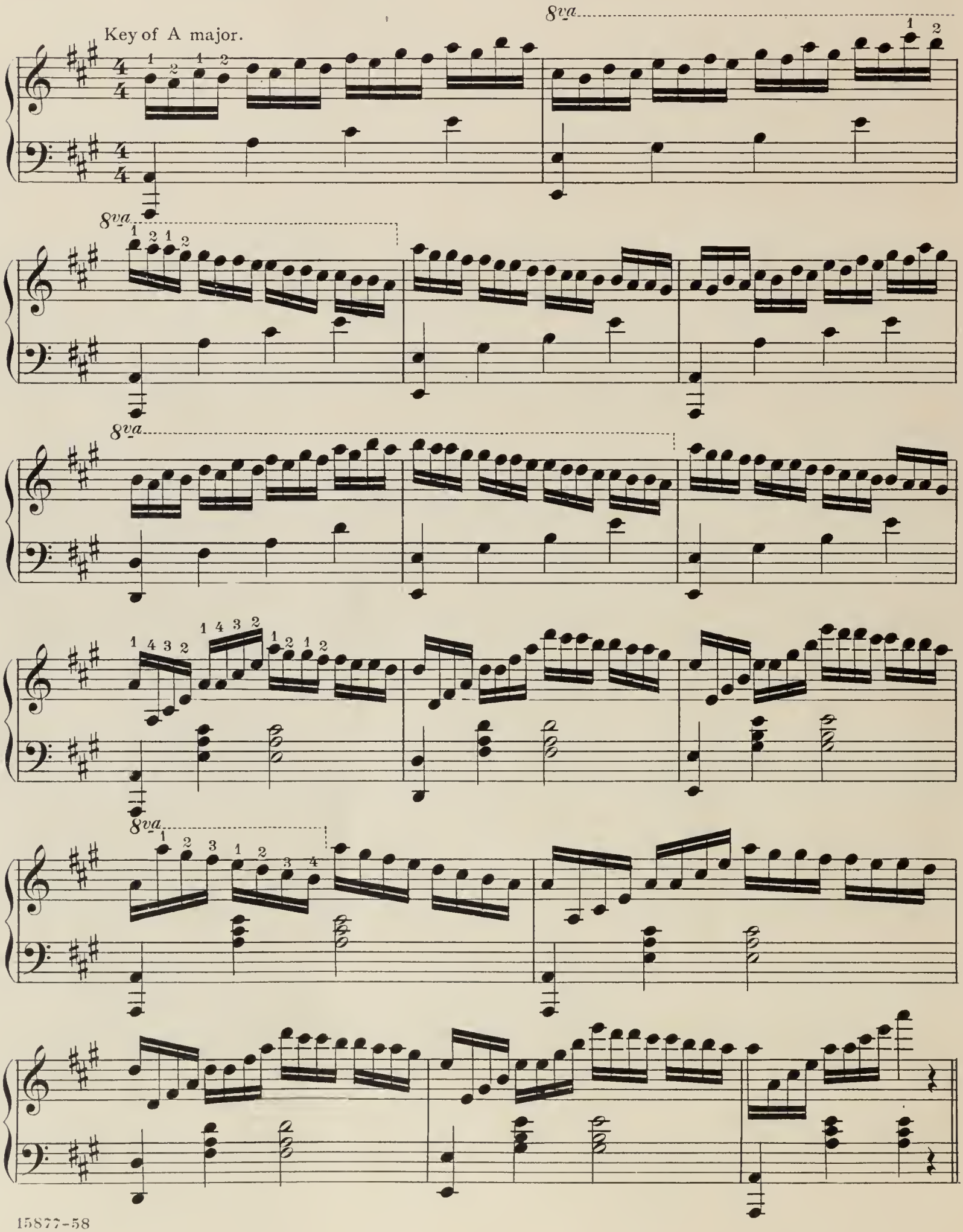
8va

rit.

f

Study of Technique in Thumb and Second Finger.

Keep the thumb well up, and bend the first knuckle slightly as you play, placing the second finger as far as possible from the thumb and pointing toward the sounding board.



THEME illustrating this form of technique.

Legato.

p

cresc.

rit.

f

p *a tempo*

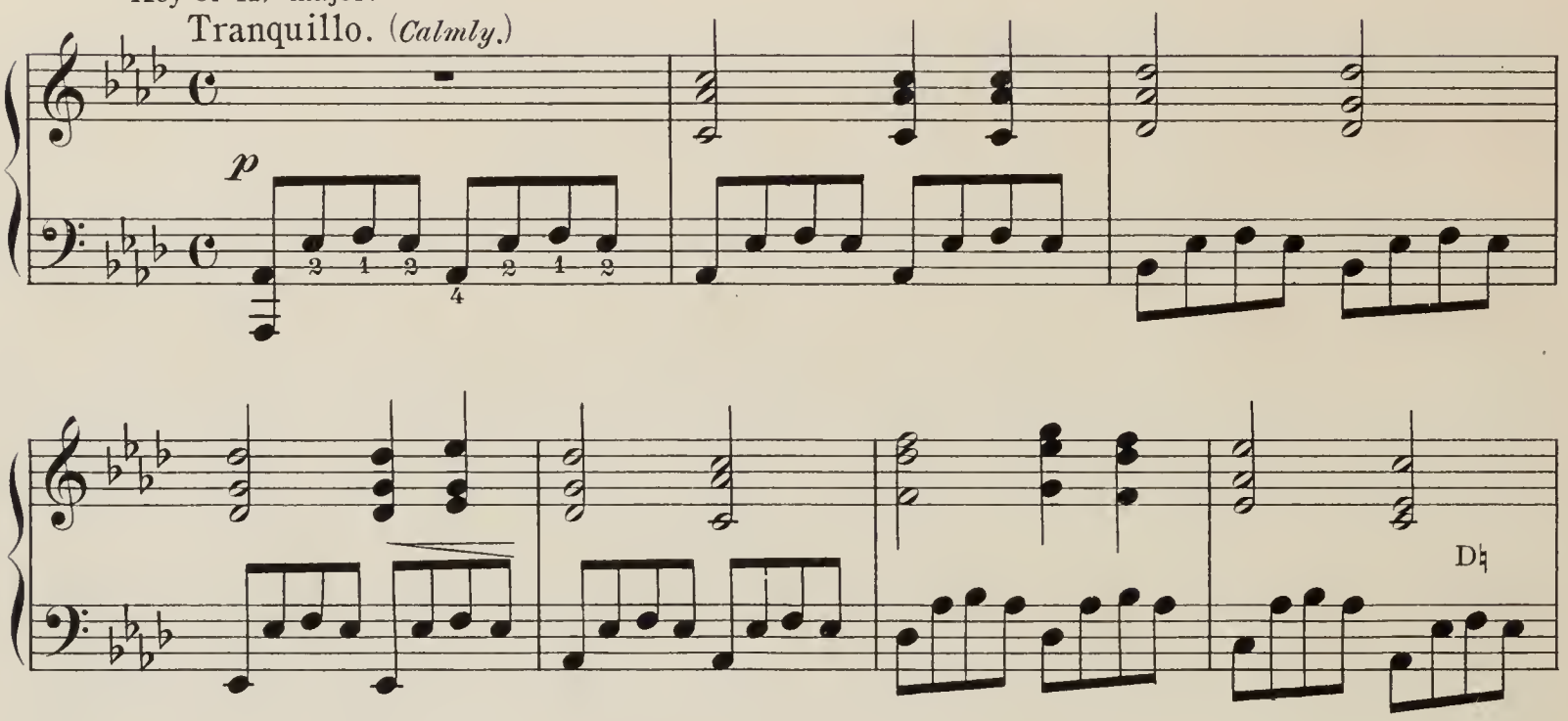
rit.

Pedal Study.

Place the pedals in each notch as indicated, keeping the heel firmly on the floor, and use the pedals positively and quietly.

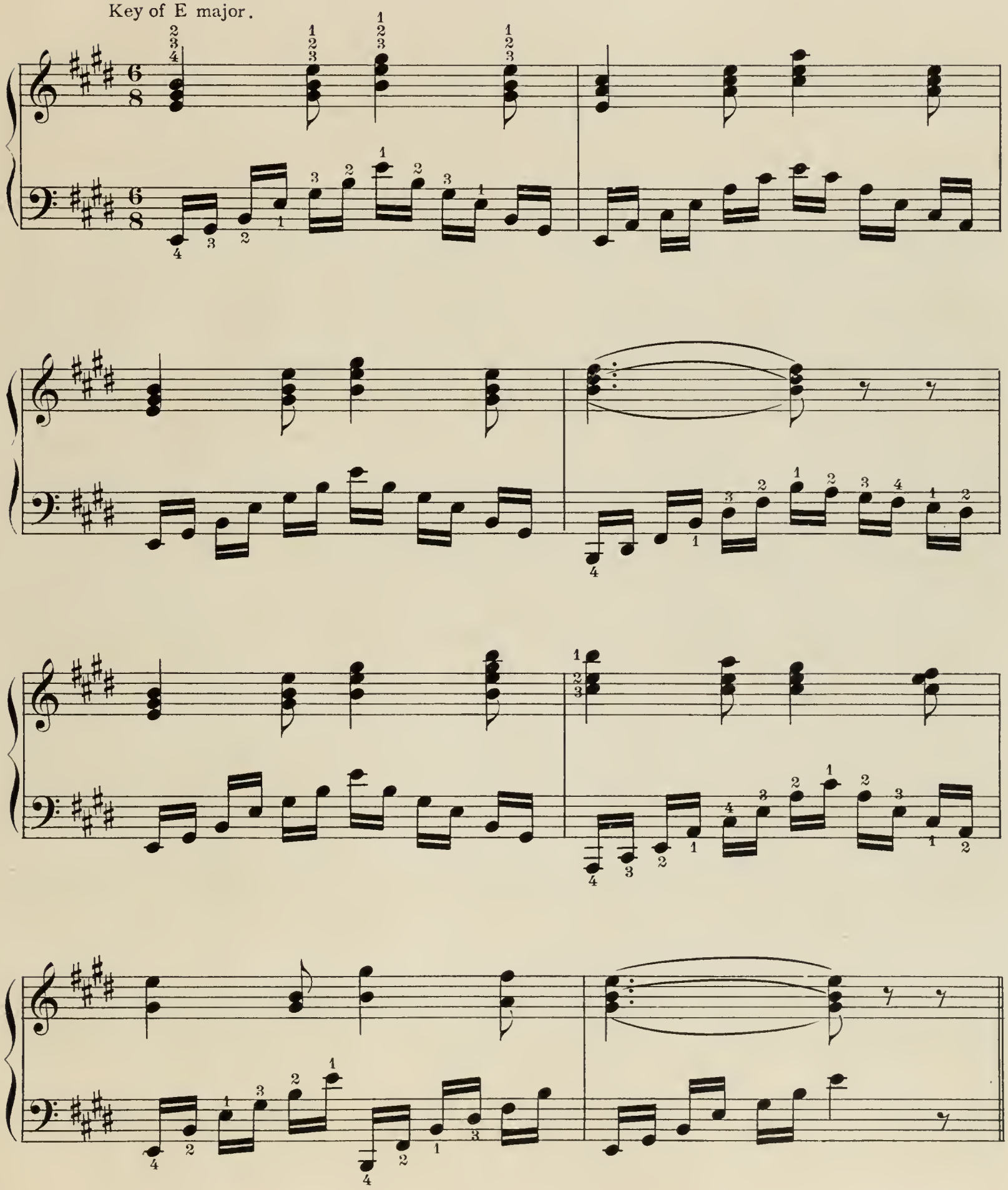
Key of A♭ major.

Tranquillo. (*Calmly.*)



Study of Arpeggio Accompaniment in Left Hand.

Key of E major.



MELODY with arpeggio accompaniment in left hand.

Andante.

E♯ E♮

A♯ *f* A♮

p

cresc.

D♮

D♯

poco rit. *p*

Study of Varied Forms of Technique.

Key of D♭ major.

4 3 2 1

C♯

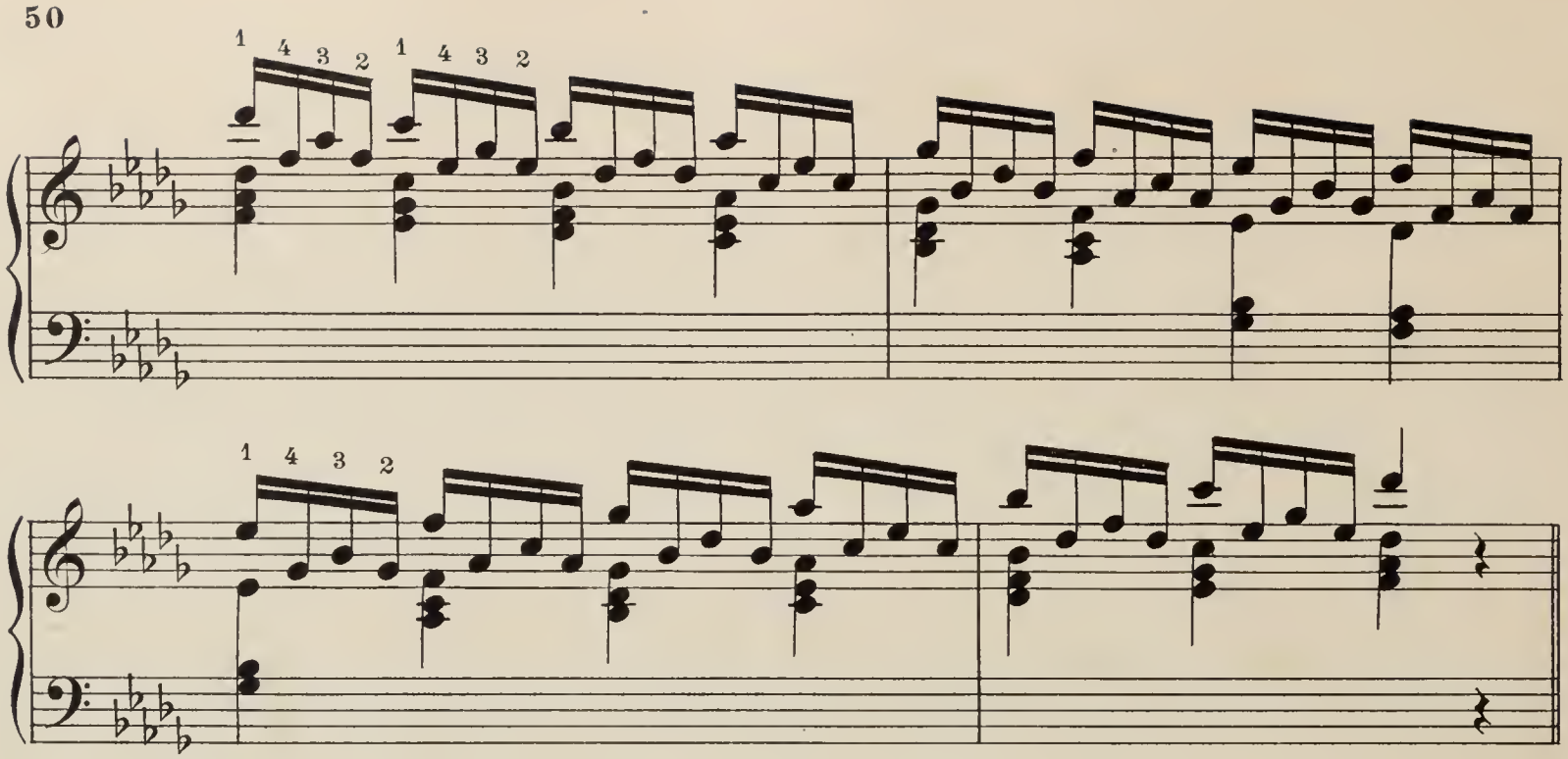
E♯

G♯

C♯

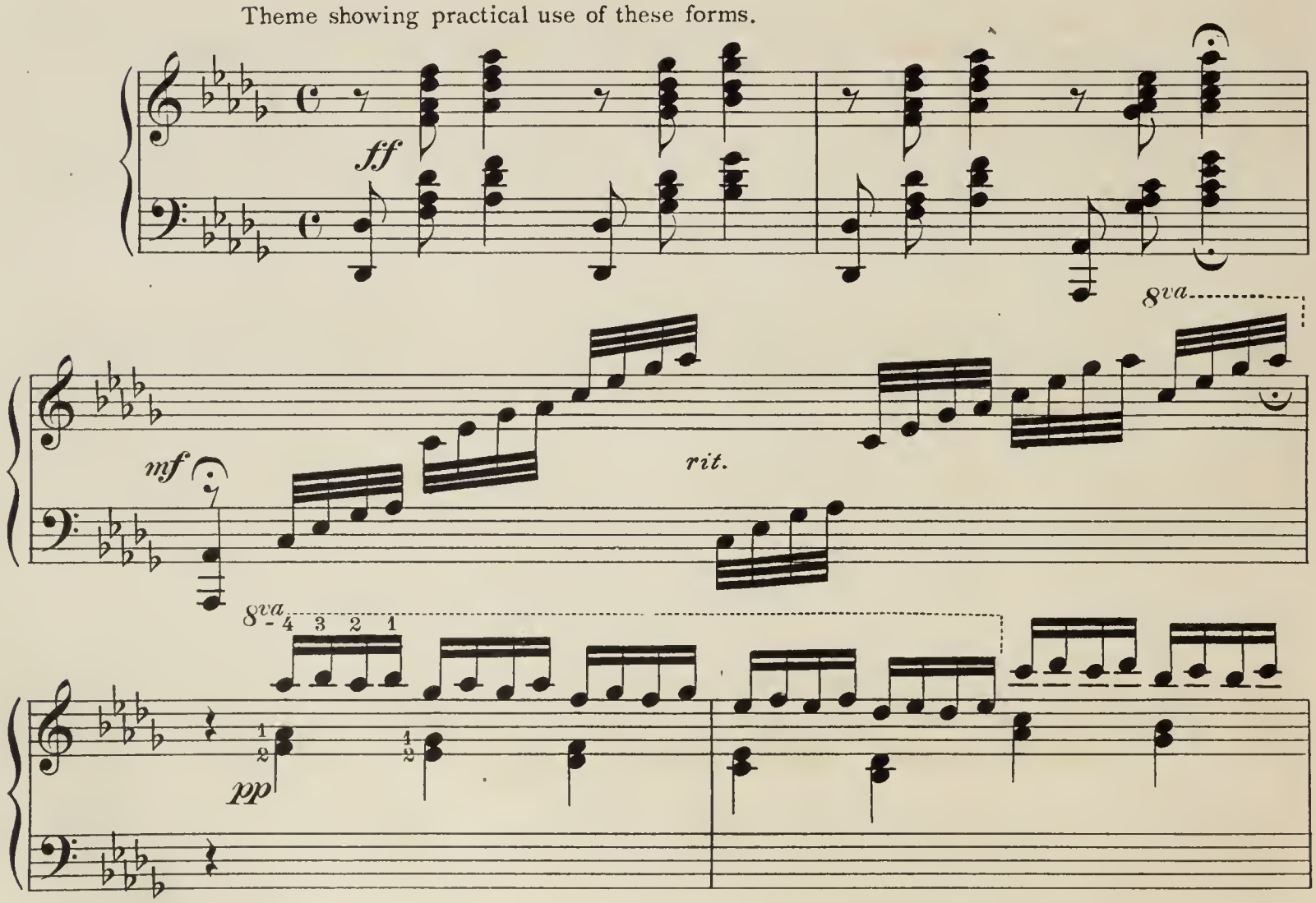
1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2

1 4 3 2



Violets.

Theme showing practical use of these forms.



cresc.

tr

rit.

C♯

B♮

C♮

B♭

Legato.

mf

rit.

a tempo

R.H.

L.H.

rit.

a tempo

cresc.

E♯

G♯

C♯

8va

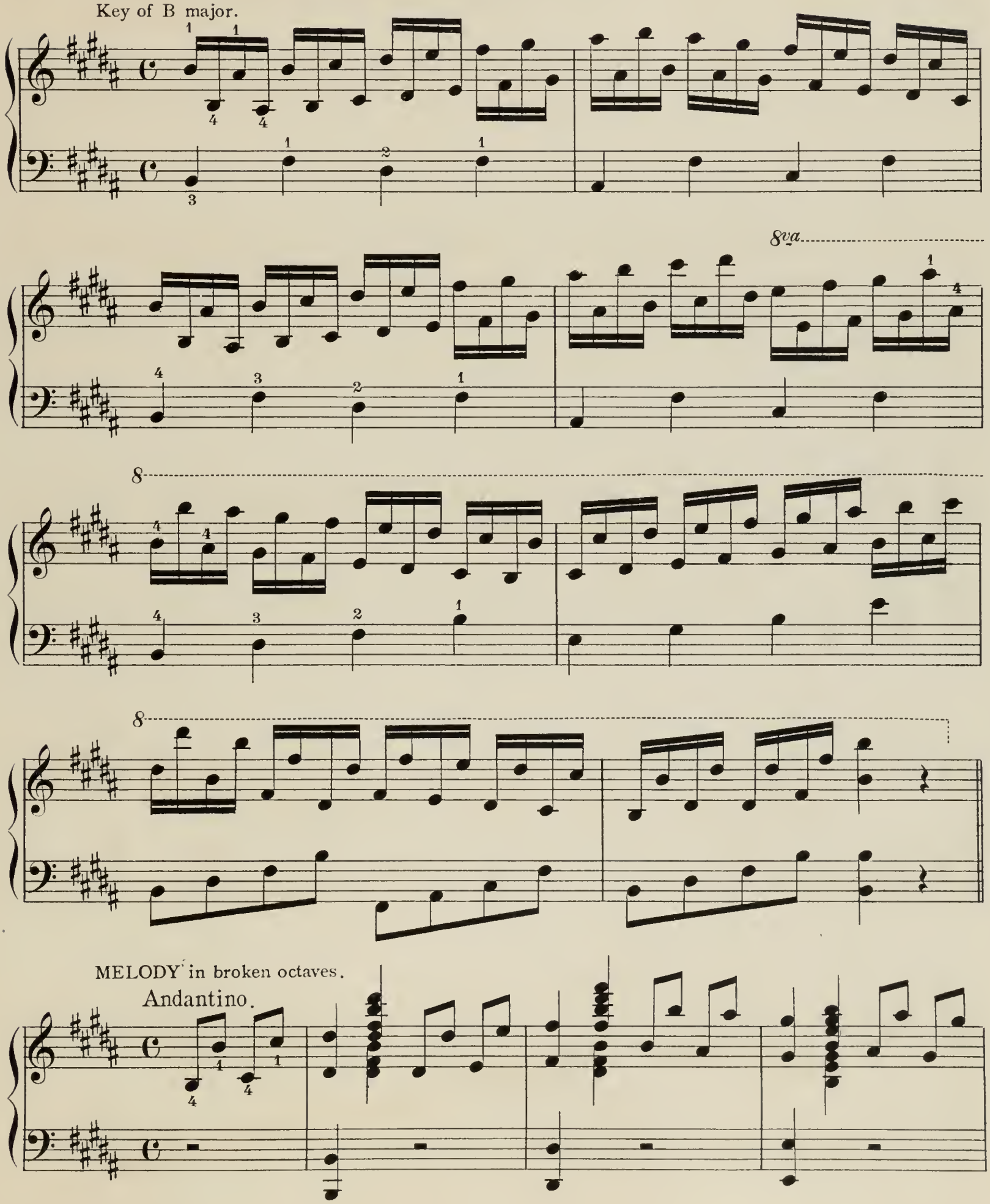
gliss.

rit.

Study of Broken Octaves.

Keep the wrist well toward the strings and connect the notes closely.

Key of B major.



MELODY in broken octaves.

Andantino.

E♯ *rit.* E♮

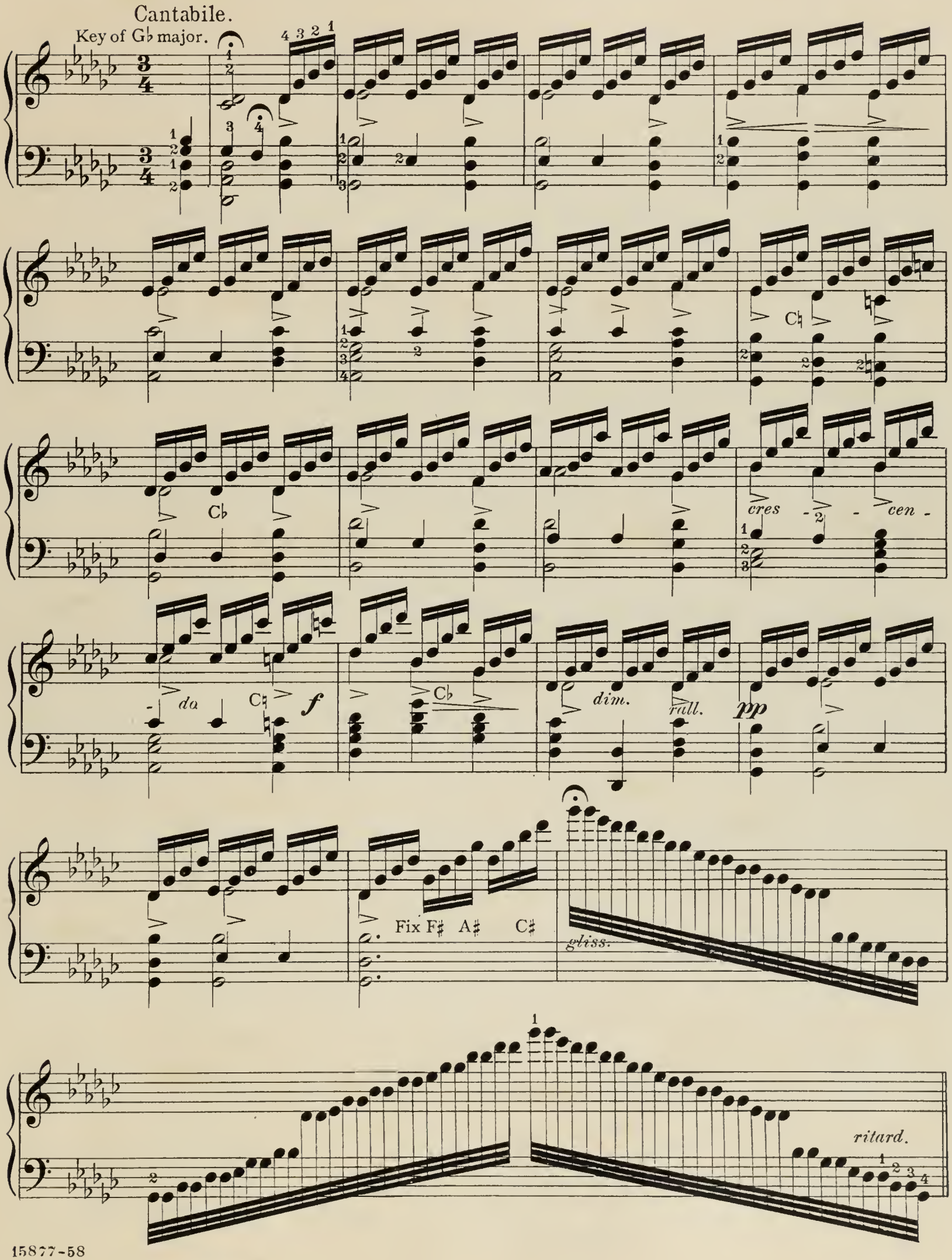
G♮ En table.

a tempo

8va

rit.

Exercise With Melody Played by Fourth Finger.



Study of Keys Practically Little Used.

Exercise in the key of F♯ to show the possibilities of the key, which is seldom used because the enharmonic key of G♭ is prefered, being in the open strings and with less complicated pedaling.

Andante.

rit.

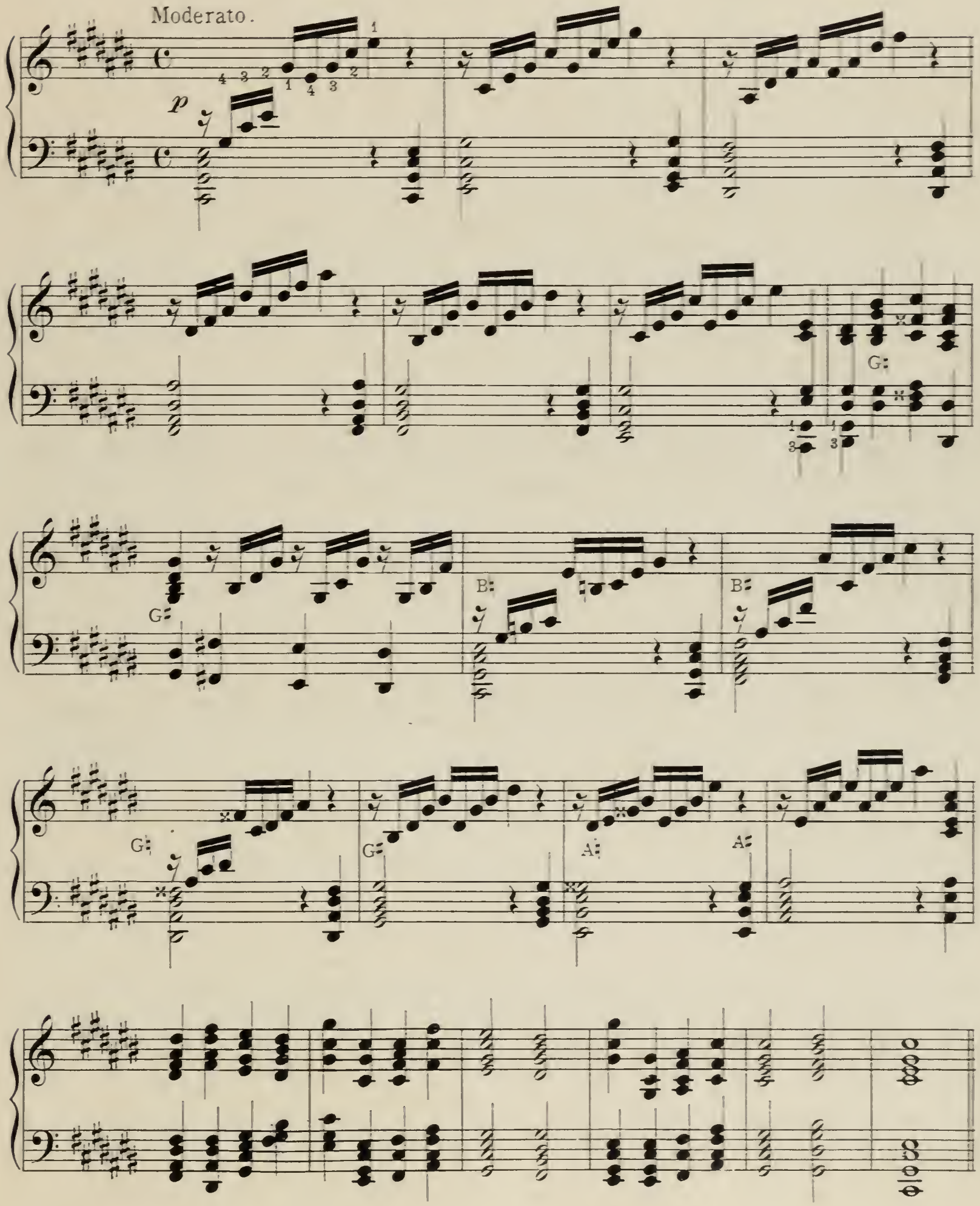
tempo

rit.

a tempo

dim.

Exercise in the key of C♯ showing possibilities of the key, which is seldom used because the enharmonic key of D♭ is prefered, being in the open strings and with less complicated pedaling.



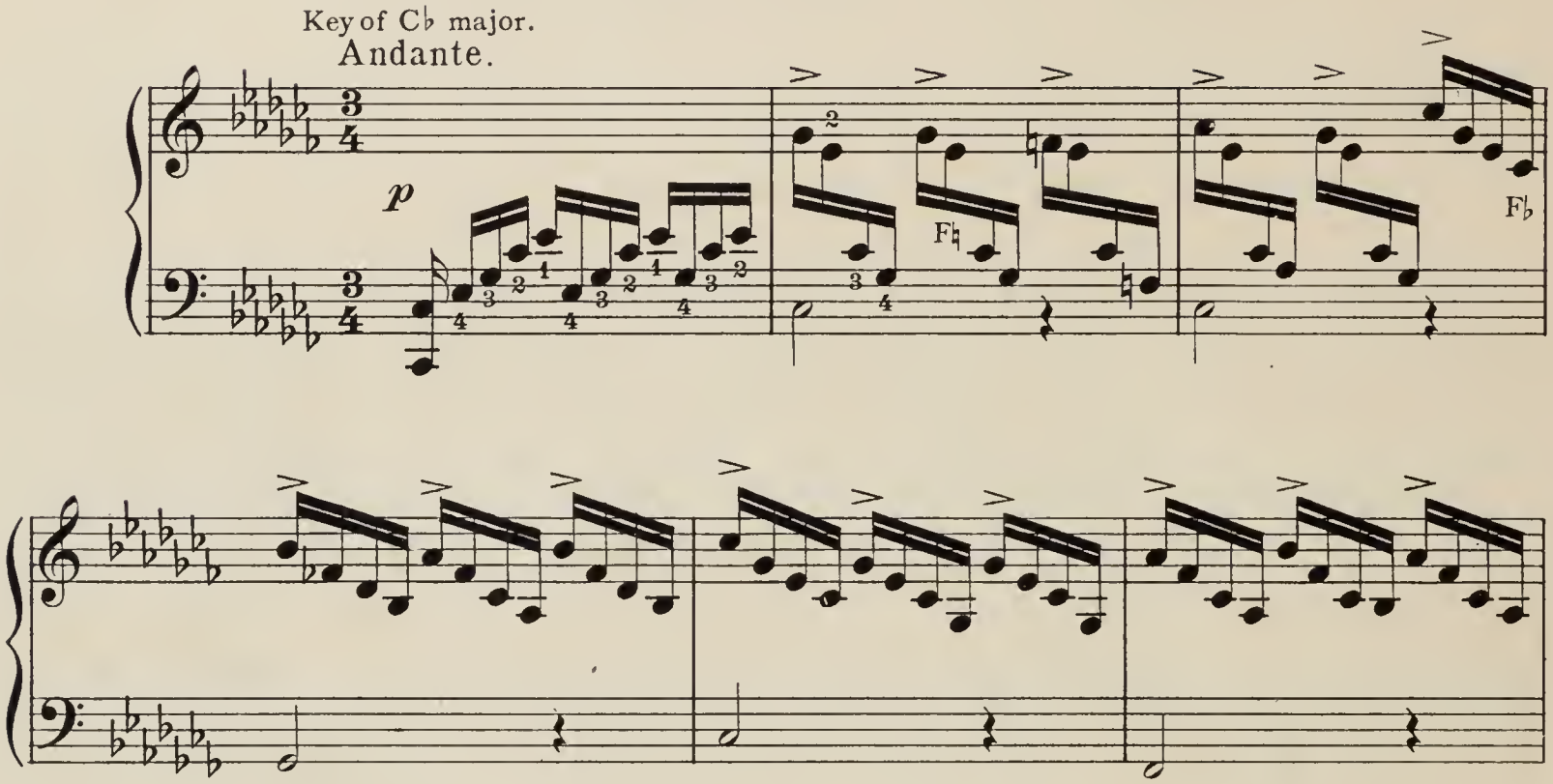
Pansies.

H. E. PARKHURST.

Exercise with melody played by the thumb.

Key of C♭ major.

Andante.



L.H.

p G♭ C♮ *f* C♭ *dim.*

D♭ F♭ *pp* *rit.*

Con espressione

F♮ D♮

Più lento.

pp F♮ D♮ *rit.* D♭ F♭

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